

Mock condemns Israeli actions

CAIRO (AP) — Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock, on his arrival Saturday for an official visit, condemned Israel's violent actions against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Speaking to reporters at Cairo international airport, Mr. Mock also said his country supports the idea of an international conference sponsored by the United Nations to bring peace to the Middle East. "We condemn the violent actions of Israel," Mr. Mock said. "They are not the way to resolve the (Arab-Israeli) conflict." He spoke in German, translated to Arabic. "We support the convening of an international conference under U.N. auspices," he said. In an interview conducted by the state-owned Middle East News Agency before his arrival, Mr. Mock offered the Austrian capital Vienna as the venue for such a conference. He said topics of his talks with senior Egyptian officials will include bilateral relations, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iran-Iraq war.

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Royal Decree approves revised law

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree has been issued endorsing the revised law on contributions to be collected for the Jordanian universities. The revised law provides for collecting one per cent of the net annual profits of the public shareholding companies registered in Jordan. The collected amount will be channelled to the universities. Another Royal Decree has been issued approving the supplement to the 1987 budget. A third and fourth Royal Decrees endorsed the appointment of Mr. Yassin Istanbuli as Jordan's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Bulgaria and the establishment of diplomatic ties between Jordan and Djibouti at the level of non-resident ambassador.

OIC talks delayed

RABAT (R) — A meeting of Islamic foreign ministers to discuss the Palestinian protests in the Israeli-occupied territories has been put back to Jan. 4 at Saudi Arabia's request, diplomatic sources said on Saturday. They said King Hassan of Morocco, who called the meeting of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), accepted the delay because the Saudis were preoccupied with a Gulf Cooperation Council summit being held in Riyadh. The Palestine Liberation Organisation, Pakistan, Iraq, Indonesia, Niger, Senegal, Mauritania, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Guinea and Jordan have already agreed to attend the meeting. There has been no response yet from the two other members, Syria and Iran. Their participation is in doubt because they have no diplomatic relations with Morocco.

Sharaa in Riyadh

RIYADH (R) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa arrived in Riyadh on Saturday, just before leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) opened their eighth summit meeting, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. The agency gave no details about his previously unannounced visit, but diplomatic sources believed it was connected with the efforts of the GCC to end the Iran-Iraq war.

Velayati in Libya

BEIRUT (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Libya on Saturday for talks with officials on relations between the two countries, the official Libyan News Agency, IANA reported. The agency quoted Mr. Velayati as saying that his three-day visit was "in the framework of consultations with the brothers in Libya about issues of mutual interest."

Explosion kills Greek army expert

ATHENS (AP) — An army bomb-disposal expert was killed and four servicemen injured Saturday in the second explosion in two days at an ammunition depot near Athens, the Defence Ministry said. A spokesman said Evangelos Giorgiannis, 53, died from injuries incurred by shrapnel from an artillery shell that exploded.

Israel tightens clampdown on W. Bank and Gaza Strip after detaining thousands

Combined agency dispatches

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The Israeli army maintained a tight guard on the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip on Saturday after admitting on Friday that more than 1,000 Palestinians were detained in a move to contain the two weeks of violent anti-occupation demonstrations that rocked the occupied territories.

Heavy rains lashed the area and no serious incidents were reported on Friday and Saturday. The subsiding of protests appeared to be the result of both rainy weather and a campaign of massive arrests.

The Palestine Press Service reported 100 more Arabs had been detained on top of the 1,858 arrested since the start of unrest Dec. 8. The army said 1,000 had been detained and more were expected. Meanwhile, about 2,000 members of the Israeli anti-war group Peace Now demonstrated in Jerusalem, calling for the government to enact a peace programme rather than use punitive measures against Palestinians.

In Bethlehem, reporters saw small groups of pilgrims going into the Church of Nativity, built

on the site where tradition says Jesus was born. Israeli soldiers patrolled the area around Manger Square and stood guard on top of the police station near the church.

Soldiers confiscated film from an AP photographer outside the Dahariya military camp in the West Bank, which Israeli officials said was being used to detain prisoners arrested in the current roundup. Three large tents were visible from the road, but there was no evidence of prisoners.

The Palestine Press Agency said mothers of arrested children gathered outside Faraa prison near Nablus in the West Bank. It said family members were not allowed to meet the military governor or other officers to ask

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CHRISTMAS UNDER ARMY GUARD: Israeli soldiers keep watch near a Christmas tree in Bethlehem, which marked its annual Christmas ceremonies with the record-low number of people in the 20 years of occupation

Palestinian group says casualties inflicted on Israelis in commando raid

SIDON, Lebanon (Agencies) — Three Palestinian commandos caused several Israeli casualties in a raid on Friday intended to show support for protests in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) said.

A statement from the PLF, headed by Mohamad Abbas (Abu Abbas), did not say if the Israelis were killed or wounded in the two-hour gunfight.

It said the three commandos had "defied all the enemy's fortifications and its security measures." It added: "One of our comrades was wounded and two others captured after they ran out of ammunition."

In Tel Aviv, an Israeli military spokeswoman contended the commandos had infiltrated from across the Jordan River. She gave no details of Israeli casualties.

The PLF statement said the operation was to support "the uprising of our people in the occupied territories and a confrontation of the continued armed struggle."

An Israeli army spokesman said the commandos crossed into Israel Friday evening near Kibbutz Maor Chaim, a "communal farm" on the banks of the Jordan River south of the Sea of Galilee. "The (commandos) were located by an army patrol. In the ensuing exchange of gunfire, one (commando) was wounded," said the army spokesman. "All three were captured."

The commandos were armed with three Soviet-made Kalashnikov rifles, hand grenades and other small arms, said the spokesman.

A military official said on Israel Radio the commandos were wearing Israeli army uniforms under civilian clothes. He said they carried bags containing heavy spikes.

Fahd opens GCC summit with warning to Tehran

RIYADH (Agencies) — King Fahd on Saturday cautioned Iran against prolonging its war with Iraq, warning that the seven-year-old conflict might be broadened to involve other powers. "Force will not solve the problem because every power will have to defend itself and, what would be worse, some countries might seek help from other powers," the Saudi leader told the opening session of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit.

Top of the agenda for the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates is to consider collective means of ending the war and deterring Iranian attacks on Gulf shipping. The summit is to last four days.

King Fahd referred to both Iran and Iraq as "sister countries, neighbouring Islamic states," stressing that their war will one

day inevitably come to an end. "But why wait till the war annihilates everything? ... it would make better sense to end it without delay, rather than wait for it to engulf all in its flames."

The king said Iran's conditions for ending the war "are unreasonable and unacceptable." He was alluding to Iran's demands that the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein be removed before the conflict can be ended. The Iranians also have asked for enormous sums in war reparations.

"Conditions come after the war ends," the king said. He praised Iraq for seeking peace. Iraq has said it will accept U.N. Security Council Resolution 598 if Iran does.

King Fahd paid high tribute to the heroic upheaval in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, urging all Arab powers to give the Palestinians unlimited support "because they are fighting for their rights."

"The great upheaval has been long overdue, it came after long patience, and could well be the forerunner of other upheavals," he said. "I salute the heroes and wish them success."

In his comments on the Gulf war, King Fahd warned that countries of the region might seek outside help if the war continued to escalate.

"Every country could find itself obliged to defend itself and get help from other countries and it would have the right to do so," he said. Kuwait has already sought U.S., British and Soviet naval protection for its oil exports through the Gulf by chartering or refueling tankers.

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Iran-hit ships limp to port after U.S.-British rescue

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — A flame-blackened South Korean cargo ship limped into port on Saturday to repair damage caused by one of two Iranian attacks on Christmas day in a raging tanker war in the Gulf, shipping sources said.

Helicopters from the British frigate Scylla and the American guided missile frigate USS Elrod flew to the rescue of the lumber-carrying Hyundai 7 Friday afternoon following an Iranian gunboat attack that left it in flames, some 30 kilometres northeast of Sharjah.

U.S. and British military officials said the helicopters pulled 20 crewmembers from the flaming ship and took them to safety and a Christmas dinner aboard the British frigate Scylla. Two men were treated for injuries.

Shipping sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AP the vessel entered Dubai harbour in the United Arab Emirates Saturday, as accompanying tug-

boats sprayed it with water to prevent an outbreak of fire. One shipping executive said the crewmen, all Koreans, remained aboard the frigate.

He said it was not yet clear what sort of Iranian gunboat attacked the 19,682-ton Hyundai 7, which had sizeable holes punched in its hull.

Shipping executives said a U.S. helicopter went to help the Saudi Arabian tanker Nejmeh Al Petrol, attacked and set ablaze eight hours after the Korean ship. Crew members quickly extinguished the fire, and one Singapore seaman sustained minor injuries, sources said.

One executive said the ship was heading for Sharjah for inspection, but the London-based Lloyd's shipping intelligence unit said the 9,566-ton tanker was believed to be proceeding on its journey to Singapore.

Iran and Iraq have attacked at least 27 commercial ships in the Gulf so far this month.

Jordan reaffirms determination to foil any Israeli plan to expel Palestinians

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will do all it can to foil any Israeli attempt to deport Palestinians from the occupied territories to the East Bank, Minister of Occupied Territories Affairs Marwan Dudin said Saturday.

Referring to recent statements made by the Israeli defence minister, Yitzhak Rabin, Mr. Dudin said Israel "is not ruling out expulsion from its list of violent oppressive measures" against the Palestinian population under its occupation rule.

"We may not be able to do much about the rest of the Israeli oppressive measures," Mr. Dudin said. "But when it comes to evicting people and throwing them out (to the East Bank), we will have to do our best to thwart these attempts."

Mr. Dudin's remarks to the

Jordan Times echoed a statement issued by a spokesman for the Ministry of Occupied Territories Affairs. In the statement, issued on Thursday and carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the spokesman rejected Israeli threats against the Palestinians of "oppressive measures including deportation."

"The Jordanian government, while asserting the rights of all citizens in the occupied territories in holding to their land, declares it will take appropriate measures to foil any act of deportation to the eastern part of the Kingdom from the occupation authorities," the spokesman said.

The Israeli defence minister was quoted Friday as denying that any decision has yet been made on deportations, but that "we have the legal option of doing so and there is no question that this is a means that we could use."

In an interview with the Israeli Jerusalem Post newspaper, Rabin said the current harsh Israeli measures in force would continue "until there is stability. I will not predict, however, when this will be."

He said that "these past two weeks have been weeks of violence — of road-blocks, stones and molotov cocktails — and the means we will employ will be in direct proportion to the threat."

Mr. Dudin said he would not "go into the methods" Jordan would use to foil possible Israeli expulsions of Palestinians, but that "we will definitely take our own measures."

The minister said that threats similar to those made by Rabin were also coming from the Israeli military and were being published in the press.

Mr. Dudin described these statements as part of "the general

(Continued on page 3)

Fadlallah links hostages with Israeli-held prisoners

BEIRUT (R) — A leading Shi'ite Muslim cleric has told the West that a release of foreign hostages in Lebanon is linked to the fate of prisoners held by Israel and its allies.

The declaration from Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah was apparently in response to a wave of Christmas appeals for an end to the ordeal of 24 foreigners missing, believed kidnapped, in Lebanon.

The spiritual guide of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah (Party of God) movement said "the whole world" wanted the foreigners free but not Palestinians jailed in Israel and Lebanon held by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia in Lebanon. "We call on all captors to release the innocent hostages," Sheikh Fadlallah told Friday prayers in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Hizbollah is widely believed to hold some of the foreigners kidnapped in Beirut.

"We want the world to support those arrested under oppression in occupied Palestine and Al Khiam," Sheikh Fadlallah said.

The SLA holds about 300 prisoners near the Lebanese village of Al Khiam.

Sources in Israel said on Friday that more than 1,000 Palestinians were still in Israeli custody after two weeks of protests in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank.

"When you raise one united voice we will raise our voice with you and then the issue will be on the way towards a solution," Sheikh Fadlallah said, apparently addressing Western nations.

"But when you follow the language of discrimination the issue will continue to move within political complexities."

"We want to tell all those who hold hostages to release the people they detained because this is not justified," he said, adding that everyone should know all the "kidnapped" were equal.

His remarks followed pleas for the release of the hostages in Lebanon from the wives of French and American captives, British Ambassador John Gray and Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie.

American hostage Terry Anderson, 40, appeared in a video tape on Thursday, urging his government to work harder for the release of abducted Americans and criticising Washington for its support of Israel.

Washington said Mr. Anderson was speaking under duress.

Treaty not fulfilled, Ghali reminds Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali told listeners to Israeli army radio on Saturday that Israel had failed to uphold its Camp David treaty with Egypt.

"According to the treaty... we were supposed to have negotiations concerning the future of the occupied territories," he said during the live interview by telephone from Cairo.

"There was supposed to be the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the creation of a provisional Palestinian government, and nothing has been applied," he added.

Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David treaty in 1979, after U.S.-mediated negotiations.

Dr. Ghali, who spoke to an Israeli interviewer in English, said Egypt felt responsibility for the Arabs in the occupied territories, where at least 22 Palestinians have been killed and more than 1,000 arrested since anti-Israeli protests began on Dec. 9.

Dr. Ghali said the lack of a political solution for Palestinians fuelled the protests and strained relations between the two neighbouring countries.

"You have a people who have

been humiliated and frustrated for 20 years, without civilian rights, without political rights, and it is normal that you will have this kind of revolt," he said.

"How can this not have an effect on the relations between Egypt and Israel? Our goal is to achieve a comprehensive, lasting peace... this was the real purpose of the treaty which was concluded between Egypt and Israel."

Asked whether he could understand Israel's need to maintain "order" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Dr. Ghali said Israel's actions defied Geneva Convention regulations on occupied areas.

"We don't believe you can calm the situation by using bullets against children... you are bound by the Geneva Convention, which you have not respected in the last 20 years," he said.

Since the protests erupted, Egypt has repeatedly condemned Israel for the deterioration in the occupied territories and for damage caused to Middle East peace efforts.

Israeli Ambassador Moshe Sasson was summoned to the Cairo Foreign Ministry to hear Egyptian protests against Israel's use of force in trying to quell the protests.

Moscow angry over U.S. chemical arms

MOSCOW (R) — Moscow angrily denounced Washington on Saturday for starting production of binary chemical weapons and hinted that it might be forced to follow suit.

A statement from the Soviet Foreign Ministry called the start of production on Dec. 16 an unprovoked militant step giving a new twist to the arms race just as 41-nation Geneva talks were progressing towards a chemical weapons ban.

"One cannot avoid the conclusion that by embarking on the road of binary chemical rearmament, the United States is preparing to opt out of an agreement on chemical disarmament," it said, adding that Washington had been impeding the Geneva talks in recent weeks.

"The Soviet Union condemns this action by the United States and considers that it creates a new situation in the field of chemical weapons which might demand corresponding measures," it said.

The statement did not spell out what these might be and softened the threat by saying that for the time being Moscow would continue to do all in its power to ensure the Geneva talks did not break down.

Rejecting Western suggestions that the Soviet Union has well over 300,000 tonnes of chemical weapons, the statement said

Soviet stocks did not exceed 50,000 tonnes, all located on Soviet territory.

The United States says it stopped making chemical arms in 1969 but had to launch the binary programme because Moscow had accumulated huge stocks in the years since then.

Binary weapons are a new generation of arms in which toxic effect comes only when two chemicals in a warhead are mixed. The Geneva talks moved closer to a global ban on chemical weapons this year when Moscow dropped objections to on-site inspection as a means of verifying compliance with an accord.

Soviet and American experts have since visited sites in each other's countries to see how chemical weapons would be destroyed in the event of an agreement.

Iran executes 'saboteur'

NICOSIA (AP) — A saboteur was publicly executed Saturday in the same square in downtown Tehran where he planted a car bomb that killed 20 people in 1986, Iranian Television said. He was apparently one of four men arrested three months after the Aug. 19, 1986, bombing in the central square.

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UAE urges buffer force to separate Gulf enemies

King Fahd hopes for peaceful end to war

RIYADH (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) president, in remarks published on Saturday, called for an independent force to separate Iran and Iraq militarily.

Sheikh Zaid Ibn Sultan Al Nahayan, also told Saudi newspapers that Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders, gathering for a summit in Riyadh, should send envoys to Iran to try to end the seven-year-old war.

"Talks between Gulf countries and Iran are essential," he said. Sheikh Zaid repeated a call he made at last month's Amman Arab Summit that three Arab leaders be delegated to travel to Tehran and Baghdad to mediate in the war.

The conflict increasingly affects the GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the UAE — and most of the

past seven GCC summits have sent envoys to Tehran, but without success.

Sheikh Zaid said that if Arab envoys failed again, the war should be brought before the entire Islamic World and suggested independent military force.

"Why aren't forces placed between the two sides to return each one to its land and stop it at its limit? This is the proper solution," he said.

Sheikh Zaid criticised the presence of more than 80 foreign warships in the Gulf to protect their national-flag ships from Iraqi and Iranian attacks.

"The foreign presence is not

for the sake of the Arabs, or for the sake of the world, but for themselves," he said.

In a separate interview, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia told Al Jazeera newspaper he still hoped for a peaceful end to the war.

"Despite the gloomy atmosphere which prevails in the region, as a Muslim I am still hopeful that the clouds will disperse and reason and logic will eventually prevail in the interest of peace," he said.

He said talks were continuing on a proposed GCC security pact which has remained unsigned for five years over Kuwait's objections to a clause on cross-border pursuit of suspects.

"There is a legal side which must still be completed, but on the practical side, as is known, cooperation and consultation are taking their path among the GCC states," the king said.

Largest operating tanker enters Gulf

DUBAI (R) — The largest tanker currently sailing, the 564,739-tonne Bermuda-registered Esso Atlantic, entered the Gulf on Saturday as part of a British convoy.

Reporters in a helicopter said an Iranian frigate a mile away questioned the ships by maritime radio as they sailed past Iran's Abu Musa Island in the southern Gulf at midday.

They saw three other tankers in the convoy — the British Fort Toronto, 31,743 tonnes, the Bahamas-registered Esso Hawaii, 278,801 tonnes, and the British Edmontown, 31,275 tonnes.

The British frigate Scylla, which on Friday helped the U.S. Navy to lift crew off a blazing South Korean tanker after an Iranian attack, threatened in and out of the group. The U.S. frigate Ford was also patrolling the area.

The reporters also said the French frigate Duplex escorted a convoy of four laden tankers out of the Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz as an Iranian frigate stood guard, asking passing vessels their name, destination and last port of call.

The Esso Atlantic, which had been laid up in Norway for four years due to lack of demand, will load oil at the Saudi port of Ras Tanurah, where it is due to arrive on Sunday.

"If the belligerents keep up this intensity of attacks, which are becoming increasingly destructive, that total's sure to increase considerably," Ms. Ruesing said.

An average of two vessels are hit by one side or the other every three days. Before July, the rate was one attack every three days.

At least 31 seamen, including Danes, Norwegians and Britons, have been killed since July, with

another 20 missing and presumed dead.

The marauding Iraqi Mirage jets are firing their wave-skimming Exocet missiles with more deadly effect these days.

The Iranians use speedboats armed with rocket launchers and machine guns or missile-armed naval frigates for their attacks and increasingly are aiming for the crew's quarters to inflict as many casualties as possible.

The latest and most ferocious phase of the tanker war began when the U.S. and European navies intervened to protect their shipping from Iranian attacks.

Iraq stepped up its air strikes, apparently hoping to provoke the Iranians to hit convoys escorted by warships.

Both sides began attacking ships in 1981. But the tanker war did not get going in earnest until early 1984, when the Iraqi Air Force began systematically hitting Iranian tankers to choke off Tehran's economic lifeline.

Iran retaliates by attacking neutral vessels, particularly those of Iraq's main backers, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. But, with the Gulf their only outlet for oil exports, the Iranians have said they will stop attacking ships if Iraq does.

Linda Burke of the London-based British Council of Shipping told the Associated Press: "There's no sign that the intensity of attacks will ease off."

"The Iraqis are being very effective. They're really keeping up the pressure."

"Even the United Nations can't do anything to stop it. It looks like they're going to be knocking hell out of each other for a long time to come," she said.

Among the losses was the 85,129-ton Singapore-flag tanker Norman Atlantic, set ablaze when it was hit by rocket-propelled grenades fired from Iranian

Tanker war toll rises sharply, 10m tons lost

By Ed Blanche
Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus — Nearly 3 million tons of shipping has been sunk or written off in the Gulf since July in the most savage spasm of retaliation attacks by Iran and Iraq in their 7-year-old war, shipping analysts report.

That raises the total of tonnage lost in the so-called "tanker war" to 10.86 million tons since 1981, according to statistics compiled by the Oslo-based International Association of Independent Tanker Owners, or Intertanko.

That's just under half the 24 million tons of merchant shipping sunk in World War II.

"It's never been so bad in the Gulf," said Intertanko analyst Diana Ruesing by telephone.

"The escalation in attacks has made the threat to freedom of navigation in the Gulf greater than ever."

Intertanko statistics show that 51 ships, 45 of them tankers, have been so badly damaged since 1981 they were written off as "total constructive losses."

The allies lost 5,150 tons of merchant ships during World War II, when even big vessels were midgets compared to today's seaborne behemoths.

Two fire-ravaged 250,000-ton supertankers hit in recent weeks were among the latest additions to the Gulf graveyard and accounted for a half-million tons between them.

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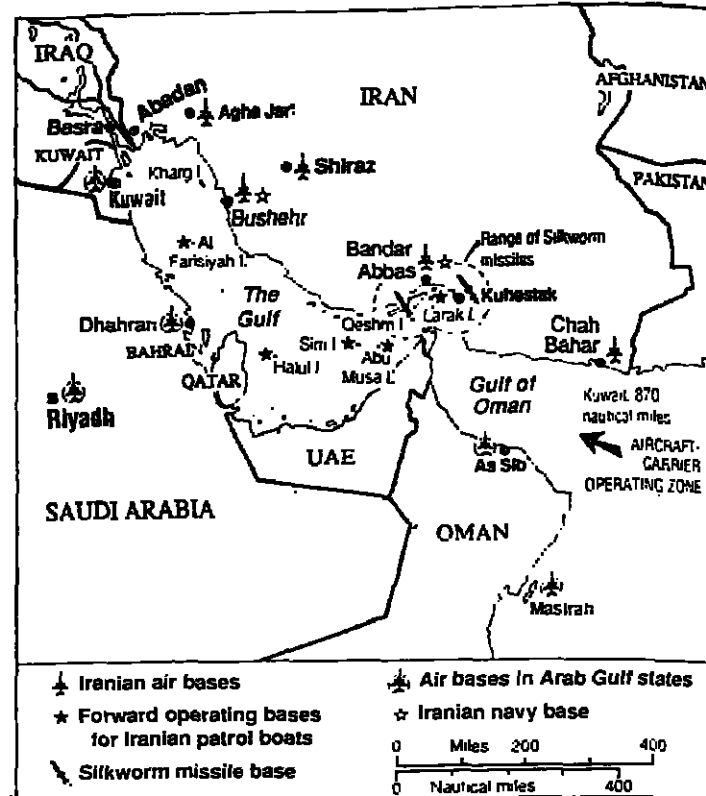
"Even the United Nations can't do anything to stop it. It looks like they're going to be knocking hell out of each other for a long time to come," she said.

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another 20 missing and presumed dead.

The marauding Iraqi Mirage jets are firing their wave-skimming Exocet missiles with more deadly effect these days.

The Iranians use speedboats armed with rocket launchers and machine guns or missile-armed naval frigates for their attacks and increasingly are aiming for the crew's quarters to inflict as many casualties as possible.



speedboats on Dec. 6. It later sank, the first ship actually sunk by the Iranians.

Iraqi warplanes have crippled dozens of tankers, but sank only two, the 61,000-ton Liberian vessel Neptunia in February 1985, and the 224,000-ton North Korean supertanker Song Bong in September that year.

Lloyd's of London says at least 425 unarmed merchant ships have been attacked since May 1981, around 155 of them this year alone.

That's the highest toll in any year since the Gulf war broke out. There were five ship attacks reported in 1981.

Some 250 seamen have been killed and many more wounded. In addition, 37 American sailors were killed on May 17 when an Exocet fired by an Iraqi Mirage F-1 fighter hit the U.S. frigate Stark.

The Iraqis said the pilot mistook the Stark for an Iranian warship. The United States accepted that explanation.

Because of the hazards, which these days include Iranian mines, maritime insurance rates in the Gulf have soared.

Insurance for a 14-day voyage now costs as much as \$100,000, depending on the hull value of the vessel. Owners have been able to parlay these rates, and the dangers, into sky-high fees, particularly from the Iranians.

Earlier this year a 60-day charter from the Gulf to northern Europe was \$1 million. Now it's double that. This has revived the sluggish tanker market.

Supertankers, which last year were mothballed, are being bought up for as much as \$10 million to run through the Gulf, shipping officials said.

But the roads to Tigris are open sporadically and Mekele has not seen a food convoy from the north since September.

At the end of November one convoy reached Wukro, 30 kilometres north of Mekele.

It took a further four days to return to Asmara since the government does not allow traffic on any stretch of road that is not controlled by the army.

A Hercules can deliver the equivalent of three or four truck loads of grain to Mekele daily.

The airlift began with three Antonov AN-12 cargo planes operated by the Soviet airline Aeroflot on behalf of the Ethiopian government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.

Within days, they were joined by three Hercules operated on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Roman Catholic Church and the United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation.

Mr. Riegert, who has run air relief operations since 1968 when he ran them during the Nigerian civil war, is impressed by the ease with which bureaucratic obstacles were cleared to start the airlift.

"Everything was done in three days. There were open doors and everyone responded," he told Reuters.

Delivering food by air is expensive, but relief workers say that unless the government and guerrillas allow trucks carrying relief supplies to travel freely, it is the only way to prevent a famine similar to that of 1984/85.

"The cost of operating the Hercules is \$600,000 to \$700,000 per month: With that I could purchase 10 to 25 new trucks," says Admassu Tefera, who manages the World Food Programme's (WFP) truck fleet in northern Ethiopia.

On the flight deck, the atmosphere is relaxed. Capt. Paouzet props his feet on the window and

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Sudan rejects Ethiopian charge of border attack

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudanese Foreign Minister Maamoun Sanadah rejected on Saturday a charge by Addis Ababa that Sudanese troops killed eight civilians in an Ethiopian border town.

He told a news conference that Ethiopian Foreign Minister Berhanu Bayeh had called in Sudan's ambassador to make the accusation and protest at the incident.

"The Sudanese ambassador denied the charge and I, on my part, inquired of the armed forces which totally denied responsibility," he said. "If this really happened, I suspect that the (Sudan People's Liberation Army) SPLA rebels were the culprits."

Mr. Sanadah quoted the Ethiopians as saying the killings took place in the town of Kurmuk which lies opposite a Sudanese border town of the same name. He did not say when they were alleged to have happened.

Sudanese troops retook Kurmuk, 600 kilometres south east of Khartoum, on Tuesday, nearly seven weeks after it was captured by SPLA rebels in their first major victory outside south Sudan.

The SPLA, based in the mainly animist and Christian south, has been fighting a guerrilla war since 1983, saying it wants justice for the country's religious and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Sanadah said Sudan was still considering whether to press its demand for the headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to be moved from Addis Ababa.

In protest against Ethiopia's alleged support for the SPLA,

Sudan said last month the headquarters should be transferred to a country which respected the charter of the pan-African body.

Mr. Sanadah dismissed Ethiopian charges that Sudan supported separatist rebels in Ethiopia. "There is no place in Sudan where rebels hostile to Ethiopia are being trained," he said. "If they have any evidence or proof to the contrary, they should come up with it."

He said Khartoum was still prepared to take part in a joint committee on Sudanese/Ethiopian relations which the leaders of the two countries agreed earlier this month to set up.

Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi on Friday held out an olive branch to rebels fighting his government since 1983 and said he wanted good relations with neighbouring Marxist Ethiopia.

Mr. Mahdi, in a Christmas message on state Radio Omdurman, said his government would continue to bolster the armed forces. "But we renew our determination to pursue all the peaceful paths with similar enthusiasm and through all legitimate means."

"We call on those who have taken up arms to realise that Sudan is the leader of the continent with regard to basic and human rights and to abandon violence which will not pay."

Led by former army Col. John Garang, the SPLA has in the past rejected several peace overtures from Khartoum. It demands the total abrogation of Islamic Sharia Laws, introduced in 1983, the lifting of a state of emergency in force since 1985 and the repeal of defence pacts with Egypt and

Libya before entering peace negotiations.

Earlier this month, the two sides held inconclusive peace talks in London which Minister of State for Defence Fadul Allah Bourmah Nasser, who led the government side to the negotiations, later described as positive.

The war in south Sudan, the second since 17 years of fighting ended in 1972, has so far claimed more than 20,000 lives, according to unofficial estimates.

The rebels claimed their first victory outside the south on Nov. 12 when they captured the town of Kurmuk some 600 kilometres south east of Khartoum.

Government troops on Tuesday retook the town and said they killed 1,000 rebels for the loss of 19 of their own dead.

The government has said the rebels' capture of Kurmuk was only made possible through direct Ethiopian military support. Addis Ababa denies the charge.

Mr. Mahdi, who returned on Friday from an official visit to China, said Ethiopia has named its delegation to a proposed meeting of a joint committee to consider relations, which he described as tense.

He said Sudan had reciprocated and fixed a date and a venue for the meeting, but did not give details.

"We look forward to a serious and a decisive meeting that will achieve a just peace and good neighbourliness," Mr. Mahdi said.

Mr. Mahdi and Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Mariam agreed to set up the joint committee when they met earlier this month in Uganda.

BEIRUT (R) — A Palestinian commando group said on Friday that Frenchwoman Jacqueline Valente, one of eight foreigners it seized from a yacht off the Gaza Strip, has given birth to a baby girl.

The Fateh Revolutionary Council (FRC) said in a statement sent to an international news agency in West Beirut that Ms. Valente, 29, and her daughter were in good health and receiving proper medical care.

The statement from the group led by Abu Nidal did not say when Valente gave birth.

It was signed by Walid Khaled, the official who announced in a news conference on Nov. 8 that seaborne Abu Nidal commandos had captured five Belgians, a Frenchwoman and two small girls.

He said that Belgian captive Fernand Houthein, 40, was the father.

Abu Nidal group says captive gave birth to baby girl

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Committees begin studies to aid families of martyrs

AMMAN (Petra) — In implementation of His Majesty King Hussein's directives to give monthly salaries to families of martyrs of the current uprising in the occupied Arab territories, and upon instructions from Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Khayyat, special committees from the ministry have started studying conditions of the families of the martyrs, who were killed during the

current uprising.

Salaries will be delivered to the families of martyrs directly through directors of Awqaf departments in the occupied territories. The ministry's committees said that they are ready to receive contributions that citizens might wish to donate to their brethren in the occupied territories to enable them to hold in the face of the Israeli occupation forces and to cling to their land.

Heavy rains to continue

AMMAN (J.T.) — Heavy rain-fall, cold and cloudy weather and a possible slight snowfall on hilly areas are the main weather characteristics predicted to prevail throughout country today by the Department of Meteorology.

The heavy rains which fell throughout Jordan over the past five days herald a good agricultural season, according to agronomists.

In a related development, the Mafrqa Governorate's department for public works and telecommunications and the con-

cerned authorities involved in power supply have formed joint committees to handle emergencies which might result from the rain and weather conditions.

The Municipality of Mafrqa also formed three emergency task committees as a precaution towards any possible weather-related mishaps.

The committees will work on a 24-hour basis. They have the necessary equipment needed to open roads, and clear manholes and as well as water pumps.

Fayez receives well wishes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian personalities including senators and deputies were still converging for the fifth consecutive day Saturday at the residence of Mr. Akef Al Fayez, speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, to congratulate him on the success of a recent surgery he underwent.

Mr. Fayez returned home Tuesday evening after he spent three weeks at the Houston Medical Centre in Texas.

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Thursday called at the residence of Mr. Fayez and congratulated him.

Prime Minister Zaid Rifai and Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi and a number of Cabinet members, senators, deputies and senior government officials visited Mr. Fayez and congratulated him.

From Riyadh, Saudi Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister and head of the Saudi National Guard, Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz contacted Mr. Fayez by phone and congratulated him.

Prime minister briefs Cabinet on outcome of Jordanian-Soviet talks

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — Prime Minister Zaid Rifai on Saturday briefed the Cabinet on the outcome of the recent visit His Majesty King Hussein paid to the Soviet Union and the talks His Majesty held with the Soviet leadership.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, which reported the briefing, did not give details, but Mr. Rifai has been quoted as saying that the Jordanian-Soviet talks brought out identical views on the Middle East situation and the Iran-Iraq war and also enhanced Jordanian-Soviet relations.

In an exclusive statement to the Arabic daily newspaper Al Ra'i, published on Friday, Mr. Rifai said the King's talks with Soviet leaders were of paramount importance and that the visit, which he described as successful and historical, had enhanced ties of friendship and respect between both countries.

The talks His Majesty held with Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Gromyko and those held by other Jordanian officials reflected the identical views, particularly in relation to Middle East issues and the Iran-Iraq war, the prime minister said.

Mr. Rifai further said that the next stage will witness further enhancement of relations between both countries in all fields, including political, economic, cultural and scientific fields.

The agreement of both the Jordanian and Soviet sides to set up a joint committee for mutual cooperation is a practical evidence that both the Jordanian and Soviet leaderships are in-

terested in translating and enhancing bilateral relations in particular and the Arab-Soviet relations in general. Mr. Rifai added.

The prime minister noted that King Hussein enjoys high respect in the world due to his pan-Arab and international role.

On the current uprising in the occupied Arab territories, Mr. Rifai said that Jordan welcomes this uprising against the occupation authorities. He expressed Jordan's support for this uprising saying: "We are with the uprising with all our capabilities and resources, as King Hussein has said."

However, Mr. Rifai added that this uprising needs the support of all the parties concerned and stressed the need for finding a comprehensive, just and durable settlement to the Middle East question through the convocation

of an international peace conference.

In Moscow, President of the Soviet Praesidium Andrei Gromyko described his talks with King Hussein as fruitful, and constructive and added that it would contribute to cementing bilateral relations in particular and Soviet-Arab relations in general.

In a statement he made on Thursday, Mr. Gromyko said that he stressed the Soviet stand vis-a-vis the Iran-Iraq war and said that the Soviet Union supports the United Nations Security Council Resolution 598, which calls for an immediate end to the war. He added that any delay in the implementation of the resolution would lead to taking additional measures aimed at enforcing the resolution.

Mr. Gromyko expressed the hope that efforts made during the forthcoming stage will lead to ending the war.

Mr. Gromyko also called for the early convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East question, saying that this conference is vital for establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

DLDNA launches documentation week

AMMAN (Petra) — Several activities, displays and seminars highlighting the educational and historical role of national documentation are part of a week-long celebration which was launched throughout the Kingdom on Saturday by the Department of Libraries, Documentation and National Archives (DLDNA).

Jordan's seven-day celebration which aims at shedding more light on the importance of documentation for the public, comes in line with a resolution passed by the United Nations General Assem-

bly on the need to hold week-long activities throughout the world. Jordan has been holding such events since 1979.

On the occasion, an exhibition of photographs and documents depicting all aspects related to the Great Arab Revolt will be mounted. The exhibition includes a special ward on the activities of Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali, the great grandfather of His Majesty King Hussein and leader of the Great Arab Revolt. Other displays in this exhibition, to be held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC),

include sections on the sons of Sharif Hussein and other key figures who participated in the Great Arab Revolt, and books and documents covering that.

A specialised seminar on the Great Arab Revolt will also be held as part of the celebrations, in addition to media campaigns stressing the importance of preserving documents.

In an interview with Petra, DLDNA Director General Ahmad Sharkas said the Kingdom's keenness on staging these week-long celebrations emanated

from the country's realisation of the role of documents and archives in preserving the country's cultural heritage.

"Without documentation there will be no history. Documents are the key to the past and present developments as they record the history and achievements of nations, and peoples," said Dr. Sharkas.

"Documentation," he said, "play a major role in the citizen's life" as they provide all needed information on historical, and cultural events.

Jordan reaffirms determination to foil any Israeli expulsion plan

(Continued from page 1)

attitude of both the Israeli military and officials." He said that the two dominant parties in the Israeli coalition government — Likud and Labour — were supporting such measures. He noted that the Israeli defence minister was from the Labour Party.

Mr. Dudin said that rather than escalating its harsh practices against the civilian population in the occupied territories, Israel "should do some serious thinking about withdrawal" from the occupied lands. "There should be a change in attitude... towards accepting the principle of land for peace."

He said that the Palestinians under Israeli occupation "will al-

ways be able, one way or the other, to express their frustration and anger" in the face of Israel's denial of their basic human rights.

His Majesty King Hussein has issued a directive to concerned authorities to allocate monthly salaries to the families of Palestinian martyrs who fell to Israeli bullets during the uprising in the occupied territories.

In Friday's interview with the Jerusalem Post, the Israeli defence minister rejected criticism that has been levelled against him in the U.S. for reportedly disregarding American advice not to institute a "hardline" policy.

"I express regret over the loss of life, but our warnings went

unheeded and the violence continued. Then, rubber bullets and gas were ineffective, leaving us no option but to use the means we did," he said. Rabin admitted to reports that Israeli snipers had fired at demonstrators were correct. "But here again," he said, "the goal was to minimise casualties."

The snipers, who are attached to all units, he said, used small-calibre, .22 rifles for pinpoint accuracy "aiming only for the feet." He denied that most of the victims had been children.

Mr. Dudin deplored the U.S. position vis-a-vis Israel's response to the Palestinian uprising and the American abstention on a Security Council resolution expressing regret at Israel's mea-

sures. Mr. Dudin described the resolution as "diluted from a strong condemnation to a mere regret."

Referring to Washington's statements that it was trying to seek to end the cycle of violence, Mr. Dudin asked: "How can we believe the U.S. can still play an acceptable role in the area in the light of its stands? We regret the American position?"

Observers closely following the situation in the occupied territories say they expect a resurgence of Palestinian uprising in the coming days.

One observer said that funerals expected to be held for Palestinians killed in the clash with Israeli occupation forces or for Palestinians who may die from

bullet wounds were bound to break into protest demonstrations against Israeli forces.

He said the families of the several hundred Palestinians detained in Israeli prisons will attempt to find out the whereabouts of their relatives "will certainly move things towards more confrontation."

Apart from a newly-opened prison near Dahariya, south of Hebron, the Ansar 2 prison centre in Gaza has reportedly been expanded to absorb the massive number of Palestinian detainees. Others are being held in prisons in Nablus and Hebron and elsewhere.

Israel tightens clampdown after mass detentions

(Continued from page 1)

about their sons.

A commercial strike continued in Nablus and the Balata camp, which has been a focus of violent demonstrations, the agency said.

The army said a curfew was imposed on the Askar refugee camp, also near Nablus, after demonstrators stormed a police station Friday night.

In Gaza City, women met in an elementary school in the Jabaliya refugee camp and called for the release of prisoners and an end to a curfew that was keeping the 60,000 residents inside the confines of the shantytown, the Palestine Press Agency said.

The agency said the women appealed for international help to ensure the safety of prisoners. They said prisoners were being beaten and made to live in tents in cold and rainy weather.

Felicia Langer, an Israeli lawyer who represents Palestinian prisoners, said she had been unable to locate three of her clients for eight days until the military's legal adviser in the West Bank told her two were in Faraa and one in Dahariya.

"I was so furious," she told AP. "I said we already look like South Africa, now we are turning into an Argentina where people cannot be found."

An Arab reporter said a commercial strike had ended in Gaza City, where 150,000 people live.

Residents of several refugee camps said soldiers had made arrests of suspected nationalist activists during the night. Some also complained that soldiers threw stones on rooftops, smashing solar water heater panels.

Israel Radio said more than

1,000 Palestinians have been arrested since violence flared there two weeks ago.

The figures were disputed by the Palestine Press Service which said the number of those held was closer to 2,500.

Many Palestinians were jailed for between one and twelve months and hundreds of others will be tried soon, the radio quoted an Israeli official as saying.

A new detention camp is being built near Hebron and a second expanded in the Gaza Strip to house the detainees.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in an interview published Friday, urged both Israel and the Arabs to show restraint and avoid escalating the casualty toll in the occupied territories.

She said an Arab-Israeli peace conference under international auspices is even more important as a result of the violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"I hope these disturbances will heighten the awareness... that it is vital to have peace talks, and it is vital not to use excessive force in such circumstances," she was quoted as saying in the interview with the Jewish Chronicle, the weekly newspaper of Britain's Jewish community.

"Whenever one has a grievance, and the Palestinians have a grievance, you must get negotiations going. We feel very strongly that there is a chance within the framework of an international conference to get bilateral talks between Jordan and Palestinians who reject the use of force together with the Israelis," she was quoted as saying.

"We have struggled to get this

going and I'm constantly trying to encourage the United States to approve such a thing."

Israel's prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir, opposes any international conference. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the United States have expressed conditional endorsement of the general idea if it leads to direct Arab-Israeli talks.

"I hope Mr. Shamir will be willing to enter into negotiations. There are very good reasons why the government of Israel should wish this problem resolved. The Israeli people wish it. They must be keen to live in peace and secure borders," Mrs. Thatcher was quoted as saying.

Mrs. Thatcher said she had hoped to get negotiations going this year, before the U.S. presidential election campaign.

"I think the chances of getting them going before the presidential elections are not great, but they may have been improved because events now make people realise that where there is a grie-

vance, strenuous efforts must be made to start negotiations to solve it," she was quoted as saying.

The prime minister endorsed Mr. Peres' suggestion that there should not be Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip, saying "I think to build settlements is a wrong thing to do." But she refused to venture an opinion on his suggestion that the area should be demilitarised.

Mrs. Thatcher said she had not spoken to Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev about resuming diplomatic relations with Israel when he stopped in England en route to the Washington summit earlier this month.

But she was quoted as saying that if all five permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union — agree to participate in a Mideast peace conference, "it will help Israel and the Soviet Union to settle some of their differences."

King Fahd opens GCC summit with warning to Tehran

(Continued from page 1)

dropped its opposition to Security Council discussion of the move.

King Fahd said there was still hope of a peaceful settlement despite the failure of past mediation efforts. "All we hope is that Iran will listen to the voice of reason, logic and wisdom," he said.

Tehran condemned on Friday a U.N. Security Council statement on the Iran-Iraq war, saying it was the wrong way to end the seven-year-old conflict.

The U.N. statement said the council was determined to consid-

er further steps to ensure compliance with Resolution 598.

But it stopped short of reporting agreement by all 15 members to impose sanctions against Iran. The United States and some other members have been pressing for an arms embargo.

Iran's chief war spokesman Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Friday the statement included both threats and promises.

"As we have declared repeatedly in the past, if they wish to maintain the security of the Gulf and in the region and to end the war, this is not the proper way to achieve it," he said.

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ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Saturday's

Al Ra'i: High time for Arab action

JORDAN firmly and forcefully declared its intention to foil all attempts by the Israeli authorities to deport Arab citizens from the occupied territories to the East Bank. At the same time, King Hussein directed the concerned authorities in the Kingdom to allocate monthly salaries for the families of the martyrs who fell in defence of their soil and in confrontation with the occupation authorities. This move clearly translates Jordan's national commitments and reflects its determination to extend all possible help to the Arab people in the occupied territories.

Terrorism by Israel practised on the Arab people has reached unparalleled proportions, calling for immediate pan-Arab action for deterring the occupation authorities and aborting their evil ambitions and plans. Thousands of Arab people are being detained every day in the wake of the uprising against repression and the deaths of innocent people rising in the face of their tormentors seeking freedom. Needless to say, the Israeli terrorists are clearly determined to pursue their course of action against the Arab citizens and against the will of the international community. In the wake of the recent U.N. Security Council's statement expressing regret over Israel's actions in the occupied lands, Israeli leaders announced their total rejection of the resolution and also the U.S. statements of regret over Israel's actions. In addition, these leaders announced that they were more determined than ever to pursue their policy of repression against the steadfast Arab people. In the light of this situation, and in view of Israel's continued criminal actions against our people, the Arab countries should take the initiative and translate their feelings into real action, extending support for their brothers in the occupied territory.

Al Dustour: Optimistic signs

THE U.N. Security Council's statement on the Gulf war represents a constructive step in the right direction because it shows that the international community is now willing to impose sanctions on the Iraqis for their rejection of Resolution 598. More than five months have passed since the resolution was adopted by the council during which many mediation efforts were made to make Iran change its stand and accept the will of the world community but nothing has happened so far to persuade the aggressors to stop their war on the Arab Nation.

All this time the international community's efforts were foiled by Iran's intransigence and its stubbornness. The Iraqis were encouraged to take this stand by an announcement on the part of Security Council members who were in the view of giving Tehran further chances and more time to be convinced of the resolution and end the conflict. But the Iraqis were playing for time and stalling, without any intention of accepting the resolution or ending their war on the Arab Nation.

The council's recent statement has given us hope that meaningful action will be taken towards imposing sanctions on Iran and that the council members will take all possible measures designed to halt the war. This is the only choice left for the council to take now that all the mediation efforts and the attempts to seek an end to the conflict have failed. We are hopeful and confident that the council will now opt for real and practical measures to force Iran to respond to the call for peace and implement Security Council Resolution 598 to achieve that end.

Sawt Al Shaab: An urgent call

U.N. Security Council Resolution 605 issued on Dec. 22 dealing with the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip reaffirms the need for all nations to wake up and rise in the face of Israel and stop its atrocities against the innocent Arab people. The resolution, which condemned Israel's actions and terrorist practices against the freedom seekers and those who struggle to safeguard their rights and homeland, meant that the international community can no longer remain silent. Israel, which has turned its back to all U.N. Security Council resolutions and scoffed at the decisions and the will of the international community, will no doubt find itself in total isolation from the rest of the international community which cannot condone repressive measures against innocent civilians. Even the United States, Israel's ally, has displayed dismay at Israel's actions and its violation of human rights in the occupied territories.

In view of this situation, two things ought to be done: First the steadfastness of the Arab people in the occupied Palestinian land should be corroborated by all means so that Israel's ambitions can be foiled. Second: Arab countries should show more solidarity and take collective action that would deter the Israelis from further atrocities against the Palestinian people. Resolution 605, which deplored Israel's actions and restated the Palestinian people's rights in their homeland, represent an urgent call for all nations to speed up the convening of an international conference that would find a lasting solution for the Palestine problem.

Friday's

Al Ra'i: Objective stands

HIS Majesty King Hussein's recent visit to the Soviet Union and its constructive results, which were reflected in the identical views on many issues, including the Palestine question and the Iran-Iraq war is the natural outcome of the objective Jordanian stand. The results are also the natural and logical outcome of the firm Soviet stand, which has always been supportive of the Arab causes.

The new scopes which the visit opened will certainly be to the benefit of both countries and will have their unique and positive effects not only on Jordanian-Soviet relations but also on Soviet-Arab relations.

The positive results of the King's visit to Moscow and the solid and courageous resistance of our people in the occupied territories have special significance since they are coupled with the beginning of a new era of Arab rapprochement which followed the extraordinary Amman Arab summit.

Jordan's support of the uprising in the occupied Arab territories as voiced by His Majesty the King and stressed by Prime Minister Zaid, Rifai are meaningful assurances since the uprising stresses anew that Israel will not be able to occupy land and achieve peace at the same time. The uprising manifests our kinsmen's determination to pursue their heroic struggle to liberate the land and to preserve their Arab identity.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Let us deregulate interest rates

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

ARE interest rates in Jordan high or low? Should they be maintained, raised, lowered or floated?

That was the major theme in a lecture delivered by Dr. Jawad Anani, president of the Royal Scientific Society, in the Housing Bank's Training Centre last Monday. The lecturer did not give definite answers to all the questions he offered, because he is not only an economist but a politician as well, and must be understood (or not understood) accordingly.

What we understood from Dr. Anani, however, is that he is of the opinion that the scale of interest rates in Jordan is extremely rigid to a harmful extent, and does not respond to the changing needs of the markets. Real interest rates, according to Dr. Anani, are to the high side in view of the zero inflation officially prevailing in the country for two consecutive years. They are too high in comparison with the marginal productivity and return of capital invested in Jordan, and they are definitely high relative to the going interest rates on special drawing rights (SDRs) to which the Jordan dinar is supposed to be pegged at least formally.

The lecturer therefore suggested that the interest rates should be scaled down by one percentage point across the board. Such a step will enhance confidence, help debtors and encourage investment. Lower interest rates, Dr. Anani assured us, will not cause capital flight, because the bulk of Jordanian capital abroad did not leave the country in search of higher interest rates. It could not be repatriated simply by raising local interest rates above the levels prevailing abroad.

Unfortunately, the lecturer refused our notion to deregulate interest rates, and leave them to be determined by the active supply

and demand in the market. The reason he gave for this refusal was that he is uncertain of the outcome of such a step, and is fearful that interest rates may shoot up in an environment of free competition among banks which vary in their financial strength.

Dr. Anani did not deny that the rigidity of the scale of interest rates, which is fixed administratively to serve desired economic and social purposes, had actually failed. In fact such pricing proved to be detrimental to the very economic and social groups they were meant to serve. Certain categories of borrowers were able to get more than their fair share of bank facilities, at subsidised rates, at the expense of other groups which are pushed out to the parallel or black market to obtain financing, including Islamic financing which is costing between 18 to 20 per cent a year.

We think that the lecturer was eloquent in presenting all the arguments that could be offered to refute the policy of fixing prices irrespective of market forces, and to justify deregulation as a means to improve the allocation of resources, enhance the efficiency of the economy and remove distortions. However, he refrained from reaching this logical result of all these arguments, i.e., the deregulation, perhaps due to political considerations.

When the Central Bank fixed interest rates last time in December 1986 it left interest rates on deposits of JD 200,000 or more to be determined by competition. This step was seen at the time as testing the water for possible floating interest rates. After a year of this experiment, it is clear that banks are paying on such deposits higher interest rate than otherwise decreed by the Central Bank for smaller deposits. Many bankers and observers used the result of this experiment as evidence that deregulation of interest rates will

inevitably lead to higher interest rates.

Well, that may be true, but not because of this biased and unfair test. As a matter of fact, interest on large deposits was floated only in one direction — upwards. It is not conceivable for the owners of large deposits to accept lower rates than what is being payable on small deposits. They can only demand and get more. The one-sided experiment therefore does not prove anything.

Deregulation of interest rates has merits which are not disputable. The question is whether it has dangers that we have to watch and worry about. We claim that such dangers do not exist. Deregulation cannot have more than one of three results. Interest rates may substantially stay where they are now. In this unlikely event we shall become certain that administratively determined rates were reasonable and in line with the requirements of the markets but no harm can take place. The second result is that interest rates might decline. No-one is expressing fears from such an eventuality. The third result could be higher rates which would be justified since it would mean that there are qualified borrowers who are ready and able to put the funds into higher return and better use in order to be able to repay. In that case we are simply improving the utilisation of our savings to produce higher returns and higher growth.

The Central Bank is called upon to deregulate interest rates. We stand to gain a lot, and the only things we may lose are misallocation of funds, inefficiencies, distortions, capital flight, crisis of surpluses and shortages of liquidity, cheating and breaking the regulations.

Oil revenue heralds new hopes for N. Yemen

North Yemen has found oil and there is a likelihood that more may be discovered. As production starts for export, Michael Field discusses the potential and the effect it might have on the country.

IN early December a new oil exporter was born. Oil started to flow from the Mareb basin in the interior of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), across a 7,000 ft mountain plateau to a terminal at Salif on the Red Sea.

The volumes are not big enough to affect global oil prices, or the strength of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, but they will be important for the economy of Yemen. The start-up should have been on November 15, but work on the crude oil processing plant at the field is behind schedule.

When production starts properly, it will be at a rate of 125,000 barrels a day, increasing to 200,000 b/d next year. It will come from the Alef field, which Hunt Oil of Texas — now in partnership with Exxon and a group of Korean companies — discovered in mid-1984. The field has estimated reserves of 500 million barrels, which makes it by far the biggest discovery in the state.

Later, the government hopes it will be able to raise production to 400,000 b/d, on the basis of a possible further 500 million barrels in five smaller, more recent discoveries, and anticipated finds in the same area.

At the rate of 200,000 b/d, the state's revenues should be \$600 million to \$700 million a year. A further \$400 million will be spent

on the considerable capital and operating costs of the field, and revenue of about \$240 million is expected by Hunt and its partners.

The beginning of oil production is raising the Yemenis' hopes that they are about to become rich, but the government loses no opportunity to tell them that \$600 million will scarcely offset the decline in remittances from Yemeni workers in Saudi Arabia. Yemeni businessmen, meanwhile, are disappointed that they have not been more involved in the development of the Alef field. The contractors who laid the pipeline — Saipem of Italy, Mannesmann of Germany, and CCC of Lebanon — let many subcontracts locally, and the drilling companies, which includes Sedco and Henley (owned by Hunt), have done the same.

But it is felt that Hunt could have gone more to Yemeni companies for ordinary service work and purchasing, instead of dealing directly with the manufacturers it knew in the U.S. A widespread comment is that Hunt, having never worked abroad on this scale before, was unaware of the diplomatics required of an oil company in a developing country.

Hunt's managers refuse to talk to journalists — or almost anyone else in Sana'a — about their operations. But it is argued on their behalf

that they would have found it easier to import through local suppliers if the government had not so drastically restricted granting import licences to the private sector.

The company's awkward relations with the business community are matched by poor relations with the officials in the Ministry of Oil, with which Hunt has relatively little contact. The serious business between Yemen and the company is discussed by the President, Ali Abdullah Salih and Mr. Ray Hunt, who have an excellent rapport.

The really big economic advantages for Yemen will come if more large oil fields are discovered. Apart from the Hunt consortium, there are now three concessionaires in Yemen.

Exxon has 20,000 sq km in the centre of the country. It has finished seismic work and, although the geological picture is unclear, it has decided to drill a well, starting in December.

Hunt, on its own, has an offshore concession. It has drilled one unsuccessful well, which caused its partner, Elf, to leave, and is planning another well.

Total has an offshore and onshore concession south of Hunt's acreage. Its seismic maps onshore are clear but discouraging, while the offshore picture is difficult to interpret.

The best prospects for further discoveries may not be in North Yemen at all, but to the east, in the Popular Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), where

there is a major extension of the Marib structure. Much of South Yemen's acreage has been let to foreign companies, including Total and Occidental. In the area closest to the Alef field the Russians, who are working as contractors for the government, have made a find at Shabwa.

Although 10,000 b/d is being produced from this field and trucked to the refinery at Aden, the South Yemen government is known to be very disappointed by the slow speed of development. The explanation may be a combination of the Russians' old drilling technology and their unwillingness to make South Yemen financially independent.

On North Yemeni territory there may be better chances of an increase in gas reserves, currently estimated at more than 5 trillion cu. ft. (equivalent to 1 billion barrels of oil). All the Yemeni oil fields contain very high gas/oil ratios, and large quantities of unassociated gas have been found.

The development of the country's gas may render the second refinery — being studied by the British company, Universal Oil Products — unnecessary, and the government may instead expand the 10,000 b/d plant already built at Mareb. But the debate over the merits of gas over refinery is a sensitive one, both domestically and among some of Yemen's foreign aid donors, and a decision will not be taken until next year — Financial Times feature.

Syria seen sticking to goal of strategic parity with Israel

By Jonathan Karp

RAMAT EFAL — Syria will adhere "steadfastly" to its goal of achieving strategic parity with Israel, despite the heavy burden this imposes on its economy, the head of Israeli army's intelligence said here yesterday.

Aluf Amnon Shahak credited Syrian President Hafez Al Assad with maintaining internal stability while pursuing his arms build-up, and predicted that Assad could continue to win public support as long as he provided Syrians with their basic needs.

"I think it will take Syria a very long time [to achieve strategic balance with Israel]," Shahak said. "But," he added, "the course seems to be feasible, and the people could bear the burden without causing unrest."

Based on this analysis, Shahak warned that Israel must prepare to meet this strategic threat. That, too, would take time, he said in a lecture at a conference on Syria at Yad Tabenkin.

The other speakers at the conference were Professors Itamar Rabinovitch, Ya'ir Evron, Dan Shifman, Amnon Sella and Yossi Olmert.

Shahak argued that even in its relative isolation from the Arab world, Syria would stay its course of rebuilding its military forces. An Arab consensus to confront Israel would allow Syria to change its policy and relieve it of some of

the burden, but the intelligence chief doubted such a development would occur in the near future.

Nevertheless, Israel was monitoring reconciliation efforts between Syria and Iraq, Shahak reported that Syria and Egypt were taking steps that could eventually lead to their reconciliation.

"I don't think this will lead to a major change of course in the near future, but if it occurs, it will be more significant than the rapprochement between Syria and Iraq," he said.

Shahak traced the development of Syria's concept of "strategic balance" from its inception following Camp David through the Lebanon war, after which the term took on connotations of building a viable political and economic entity rather than just a military power.

In military terms, Syria was pursuing three aims, Shahak said: strengthening its defensive capabilities by rebuilding its air force and air defences and by maintaining a presence in Lebanon; trying to develop a flexible army which could easily be shifted into an offensive posture; and developing a deterrence to Israel's "unconventional" weapons.

Hence, Syria's decision to develop chemical weapons. "This was resolved by the highest political echelons," Shahak said of the decision. — The Jerusalem Post.

Iran boosting influence in Lebanon

By Samia Nakhoul

Reuter

BEIRUT — Iran is using hard-pressed resources to spread its influence to the Mediterranean shores, pouring in money to establish a power base among Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslim community.

The march of posters of Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the Iranian-backed Hizbollah (Party of God) along south Beirut streets pinpoint where Tehran is gaining ground.

The backing for Lebanon's Shi'ites, despite a draining seven-year-long war with Iraq, constitutes mainly Shi'ite Iran's biggest aid programme since the 1979 Islamic revolution, political experts say.

A Shi'ite official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tehran wanted a power base in Lebanon for its revolutionary message even if it should lose its foothold in east Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, base since 1982 for some 500 Revolutionary Guards.

This year Tehran started assisting thousands of Shi'ite families in Beirut, after previously only aiding Hizbollah, anti-Israeli guerrillas and relatives of "martyrs" killed in action.

The official told Reuters Iran was now spending about \$5 million a month for its aid projects in Lebanon.

He said Iran's hand was significantly strengthened in comparison with other foreign powers in Lebanon as it had built a network of institutions that, literally, brought home its involvement.

"Even if circumstances in Lebanon turned against their military presence, there is no force that can uproot the Iranian ideological beliefs here and infrastructure," he said.

The Tehran-based Martyrs Foundation and such organisa-

tions as the Islamic Health Committee, the Organisation of the Oppressed and the Imam Khomeini Office are filling a need for free medical, educational and social services for the Lebanese.

Lebanese government support disappeared in 12 years of civil war, while Israel's 1982 invasion drove thousands of Shi'ites from the south to Beirut's suburbs where packed apartment blocks line narrow streets.

Iran finances the year-old Al Hawra Maternity Hospital in the suburbs, as it does the Imam Khomeini Hospital in the east Lebanese town of Baalbek — a hotbed of pro-Iranian militants.

Some 40,000 schoolchildren have been awarded scholarships by Iran, which provides its donations through Hizbollah offices in eastern Lebanon and the poverty-stricken Beirut suburbs, an Iranian official said.

"Iran also offered partial assistance with fees for some 78,000 students, including 25,000 enrolled at universities, to ease the burden of the economic crisis in Lebanon," a Hizbollah official said.

The lowest-paid have suffered most from Lebanon's economic collapse, which has thrust inflation to an estimated 550 per cent since January and forced people to queue daily for bread and fuel.

"Through education, Iran will be able to manipulate the new generation by gaining sympathy and support among youngsters," a south Beirut resident commented.

"They are not penetrating through any political door but through an organised educational and relief system," he said.

Children say they like their Iranian-supplied books and stationery decorated with pictures of Khomeini.

The suburbs, a 41-square-

kilometres semi-autonomous region closed to government authority, bustle with women in Iranian-style chadors — black robes from head to toe — while prayers recorded in Iran waft from loudspeakers.

The area, home for an estimated 800,000 Shi'ites, is rapidly turning into a mini-state like many other parts of Lebanon.

Some pharmacies, cooperatives and shops in south Beirut are run according to Sharia — in addition to a branch of Bank Saderat Iran, the largest state bank based in Tehran.

Iran's Ambassador to Lebanon Ahmad Dastmalchian told Reuters Lebanon's economic crisis and the resulting hardship among the already-impoorished was what prompted Iran to help.

"We felt we should help our sisters and brothers so they can keep up their resistance against Israel," he said. "It was our humanitarian and legitimate duty to relieve the people here."

Political observers said Iranian-style fundamentalism was flourishing among the country's estimated 1.3 million Shi'ites — the largest single religious sect in a population of some four million.

The Shi'ite community was at the bottom of the Lebanese social scale when Khomeini's revolution showed what his believers could do on their own to overturn the status quo.

"It is natural people here feel sympathetic to the Iranian revolution, especially after they received no help or response from any country other than Iran," Dastmalchian said.

He said Iran's "goodwill gesture" was welcomed because it at last provided what the Lebanese were longing for.

"The Islamic movement has been our only social security in the absence of functioning

(Lebanese) government institutions," agreed Hussein Mortada, a grocer in the southern suburbs.

"There are emotional and religious ties with Iran," he said. "We have an allegiance to Iran... We don't look at the Iranian aid as a bribe and neither do they."

Iran stepped up its intervention in Lebanon in 1982 in competition with Israel, the United States, France and Syria. Tehran targeted the Shi'ites, abandoned by other foreign protectors.

Israel's three-year occupation bred fierce resistance from the community.

Iran steadily consolidated its influence while Western powers had to pay a heavy price for their presence in Beirut.

Suicide bombers killed more than 300 U.S. and French servicemen in October 1983 at the U.S. Marine and French headquarters of a multinational peacekeeping force in the capital.

Pro-Iranian militants are held responsible for the abduction of many of the 24 foreigners still missing, believed kidnapped, in Lebanon. Hizbollah has denied any links with the bombings or hostage-taking.

Most of the kidnapped foreigners are believed to be held in the southern suburbs.

"There was religious and political sympathy with Iran but now our relations have gone further," said Abu Ali, a carpenter.

A Shi'ite politician in Beirut said that in five years Hizbollah had built a force of 5,000 fighters administered by a 12-man council that reports to Iran's ambassador in Damascus, Mohammad Akhtari.

Syria, which sent an estimated 7,000 troops to Muslim west Beirut last February to end three years of militia anarchy, has stayed out of the southern suburbs, saying the area was already peaceful.

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Muwaqqar, Tuba and Mushash — desert castles that were essential links along old caravan routes

Text and photos
by Rami G. Khouri

SPECIAL to the Jordan Times
TEN KILOMETRES north-east of Mushatta, at the junction of several ancient desert tracks, is the modern village of Muwaqqar, alongside the Sahab-Azraq highway. It sits on a hilltop with a commanding view overlooking both the desert plateau to the east and the fertile hill country to the west — symbolic, as Geoffrey King has indicated, of the Umayyad desert castles' links to urban, agricultural village and desert communities throughout north and central Jordan.

Muwaqqar's vast stone reservoir — still in service and usually full of water — attests to its role in ancient times as an important stop along the caravan routes that criss-crossed the region. There was a substantial Umayyad settlement at Muwaqqar, which has completely disappeared except for a few architectural pieces preserved in museums or re-used in modern structures, particularly some fine carved capitals with inscriptions in Kufic script.

One column, which stood in the centre of a ten-metre-deep reservoir to mark the water level, indicates that Muwaqqar's palace was built by the Caliph Yazid II Ibn Abd el-Malik (719-724 A.D.). There are also remains in the area of three dams, and some traces of building foundations, probably domestic houses.

Qasr Tuba

Qasr Tuba is the only desert castle that retains the original aura of a splendid, remote lodge reached after a long trek through the desert. It can only be reached with a four-wheel-drive, high-clearance vehicle and a guide who knows the way, for the castle lies in a now barren desert region 140 kilometres south-east of Amman. 70 kilometres east of the desert highway at Qatranah.

After leaving the paved road east of Qatranah, you have to drive another 35 kilometres on rough desert tracks to reach it — but the effort is well worth it, if you relish a taste of what it must have felt like in the 8th Century to come upon a stately estate after a long, dusty trek through the desert. Another demanding route that revives the Umayyad



Two sides of an inscribed capital found in a water reservoir at Muwaqqar in the 1940s. The inscription, in Kufic script, mentions that the reservoir was built under the order of Caliph Yazid II, in 723 A.D. The capital originally stood at the top of the reservoir's

era experience of trekking between desert settlements is to approach Tuba on desert tracks from Qasr Kharana in the north, a 47-kilometre, 90-minute drive.

Thought to have been started during the reign of Walid II, around 743-44 A.D., the unfinished Qasr Tuba was almost certainly destined to be a caravanserai along the established caravan route which linked Syria and the Amman-Azraq area with northern Arabia, also passing through Jafr, Bayir and Wadi Sirhan. The Qasr is defined by a large rectangular enclosure measuring 140 x 73 metres, interrupted by semicircular towers and entered by main gateways on the north side.

It was planned as two identical, 70-metre-square complexes joined by a corridor, but only the northern complex was finished. Like Qasr Mushatta, Tuba was

built of large, square, fired bricks, often placed on stone foundations. The eastern of the two rooms flanking the main entrance still has a tabun, or bread oven, and stacks of tiles neatly piled in a corner.

Near the sole existing entrance is a series of rooms with their original barrel vaults, showing clear architectural influences from Iraq and points east. Adjacent to these rooms are interconnected courtyards, passageways, open spaces, parts of walls and other rooms. Niches in the south wall may have been designed to serve as mihrabs of mosques.

Interspersed between 2-4 kilometres north of Qasr Tuba, alongside the dry riverbed, is the palace's ancient water supply system — three massive wells built of stone, with adjacent plastered pools and round structures designed for use by animals to lift



column-like water gauge, and is now at the Amman archaeological museum. (All photos of Muwaqqar courtesy of Jordanian Department of Antiquities, G. Lankester Harding Files.)

Qasr Mushash

The extensive but quite ruined Umayyad desert complex of Qasr Mushash is about 19 kilometres north-east of Muwaqqar and 21 kilometres north-west of Kharana, and can be reached on a track heading north from the Sahab-Azraq highway. It has been studied by Dr. Geoffrey King and excavated by Dr. Ghazi Bisheh of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

They identified the remains of 18 structures built of locally quarried stone. These include the main qasr, or residential building, measuring 26 metres square, with a central courtyard surrounded by 13 rooms, and a single entrance in the east wall, but lacking the evidence of the elaborate stucco and mosaic decorative

work so common at other Umayyad complexes; several long walls measuring a total of over 100 metres, which seem to have been barrages and deflecting walls to protect the settlement against flooding; at least three large stone-built and plastered water reservoirs (some of which were roofed); several smaller cisterns; a baths building with remains of its four rooms, which had plastered walls and marble floors; and their structures that were probably small dams or animal enclosures. The vast site, whose remains are scattered over an area of over two square kilometres, has mostly Umayyad pottery, with some Byzantine sherds. Eight kilometres to the north-east is Tell el-Raghl, with a small hill-top tower and Safaitic inscriptions indicating the area and the caravan route were both used in pre-Islamic times.



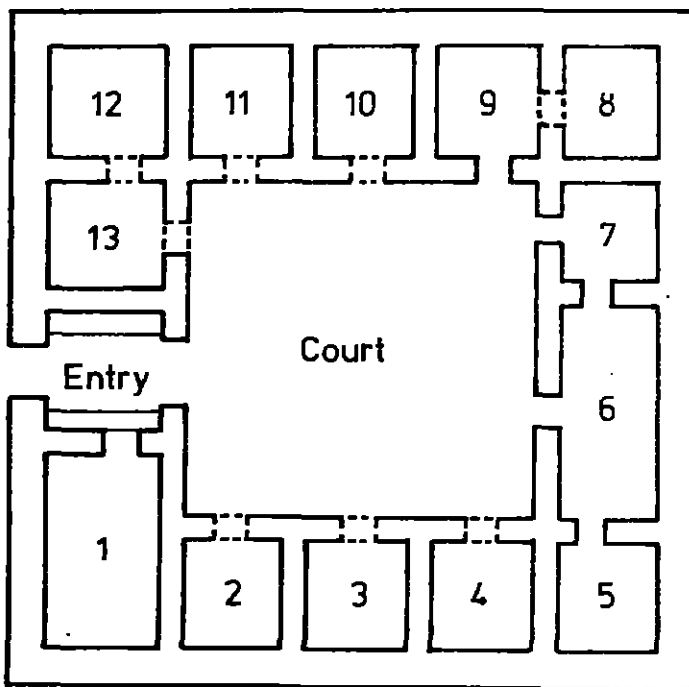
A photograph by G. Lankester Harding in 1943, showing the standing remains of the Umayyad palace at Muwaqqar, which have now totally disappeared.



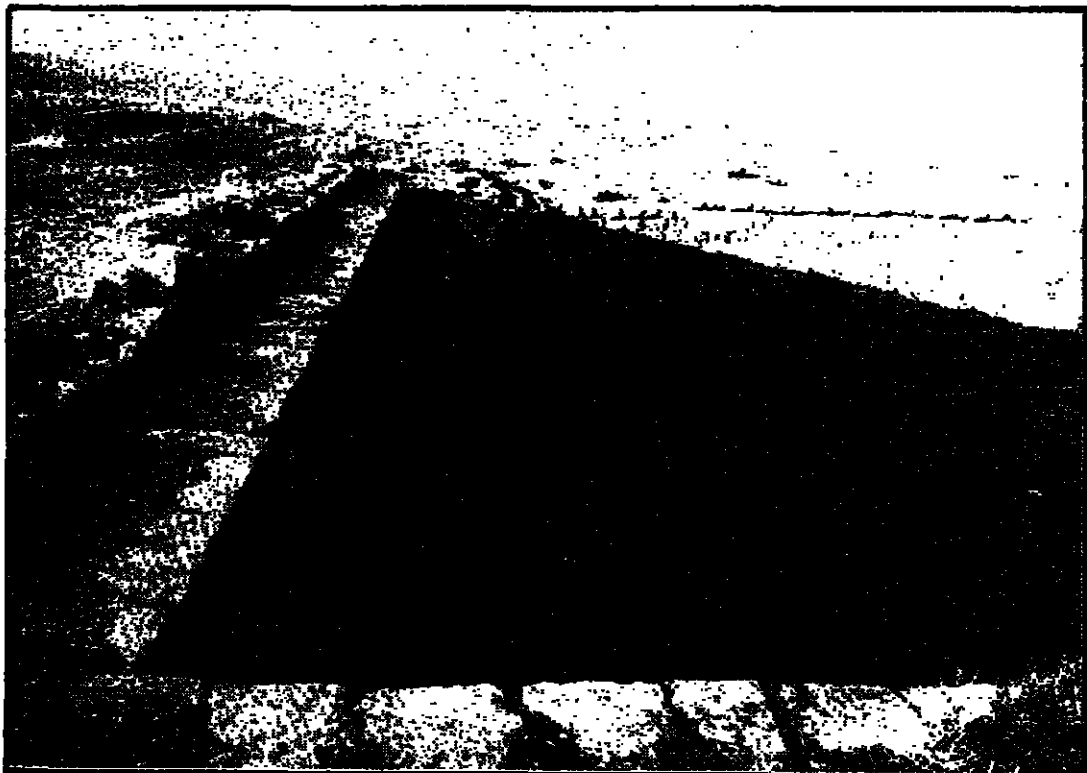
A stone-built reservoir at Mushash, with stairs at the far end.



General view of Qasr Mushash, looking east, with remains of the Qasr at left, overlooking the wadi.



Ground plan of the residential Qasr at Mushash. (Qasr Mushash photos courtesy of the Department of Antiquities.)



An underground cistern at Mushash, roofed with transverse arches and long slabs of stone.

JTV Channel 2 Preview

Sun. — Dec. 27, 1987

8:30 Charles in Charge

9:10 Divorce is Changing America
(One-part Documentary)

Americans have gradually come to accept the high rate of divorce. But they are just beginning to understand that divorce can cause more than emotional pain and anguish. In this special NBC White Paper, Jane Pauley examines some of the fundamental changes that divorce is creating in our society today.

Divorce is creating a separate class of impoverished women. In many cases, divorced women endure unusual economic hardship after the end of their marriage, for modern American divorce laws presuppose full equality for both sexes in all areas, including the workplace, despite the fact that for many women such equal earning potential does not yet exist.

Divorce is also creating a society where it is becoming socially acceptable for parents — particularly fathers not to support their offspring. Even in court-ordered cases of child support, one-quarter of the fathers involved never pay, while another 25% only pay in part. And there is no solution

apparent for the plight of the children who are not being properly cared for.

10:20 The Equalizer

Mon. — Dec. 28, 1987

8:30 Kate and Allie

9:10 Falcon Crest

10:20 Hotel du Lac
(Play)

An English female author, who spent her leave alone in a hotel on an island in Switzerland, writes a description of the beautiful scenery. She sees and her daily experiences.

Tue. — Dec. 29, 1987

8:30 Farrington of the F.O.

9:10 Remington Steele
Santa Claus is Coming to Steele

10:20 Beggarman Thief
(Last Part)

Wed. — Dec. 30, 1987

8:30 Valerie

9:10 Well Being
Name your Poison

Every culture has had its drugs;

the problem with ours is that we have too many and like to mix them. Though no-one seems to know why we become addicted to poisonous pleasures, everyone knows how hard it is to give them up. The programme finds out now different people have coped with tobacco and alcohol addiction, and looks at a new problem — tranquilizers.

10:20 Floodtide
The Catch
(Episode 5)

11:10 Hi De Hi
Peggy's Big Chance

Thu. — Dec. 31, 1987

8:30 Censored Bloopers

9:20 New Cycle Preview

10:20 Feature Film
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

Starring:
Marilyn Monroe
Charles Coburn

Fri. — Jan. 1, 1988

8:30 Nothing is Easy

9:10 Moonlighting

10:20 Falcon Crest

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Liverpool sets club record; Forest snaps Highbury jinx

LONDON (Agencies) — Nottingham Forest ended a 22-year victory drought at Highbury by beating Arsenal 2-0 on Saturday and leapfrogged over the London soccer club into second place in the process.

League leaders Liverpool were playing later in the day, seeking to extend their unbeaten start to the season to 20 games in their away match at Oxford.

Forest's victory, which ended a run of 19 Highbury visits without a win, was clinched a minute from the end of a penalty from captain Stuart Pearce, who succeeded where home skipper Kenny Sansom had failed three minutes before.

Sansom looked sure to bring George Graham's team a share of the points with his spot kick but his attempt struck the crossbar, typifying a frustrating afternoon for Arsenal.

Forest had taken a 40th lead thanks to a blunder by goalkeeper John Lukic, who raced out of his area to clear Steve Chettle's harmless looking through ball but had his header rebound off Terry Wilson, who then scored uncontested.

"When you dominate a game like we did today you've got to

finish it off. That's where we fell down — bad finishing," said Graham.

The victory gave Forest 40 points from 19 games and put them into second place ahead of the gunners on goal difference.

Also suffering trouble at home were Watford, who were beaten 3-1 by Sheffield Wednesday, and West Ham.

Rock star Elton John, whose deal to sell Watford to publishing magnate Robert Maxwell was squelched by the league, was on

hand and had his victory hopes raised by an own goal off the head of Mel Sterland just 38 seconds into the match.

But within 20 minutes Wednesday had tripled Watford's total and sealed their defeat at Vicarage road.

Cheeky goals from Lawrie Sanchez and John Fashanu ended West Ham's five-match unbeaten run as Wimbledon scored a 2-1 victory.

Another home disappointment occurred in Leicester City as Bournemouth took a 1-0 Division Two victory to ruin the managerial debut of former Tottenham manager David Pleat.

Long jumper to give up controversial medal

PADOVA, Italy (R) — Italian Givanni Evangelisti said on Saturday he has decided to give back the controversial bronze long jump medal he won at the Rome World Championships because of persistent allegations that the result was fixed. "I have decided to give up this medal because it has lost all meaning for me," Evangelisti, 26, said in a statement to the Italian news agency Ansa. Evangelisti's Sept. 5 jump has stirred controversy since November when Italian television computer and video projections suggested it was more than half a metre short of the official measurement of 8.38 metres. Evangelisti beat American Larry Myricks to the bronze by just five centimetres.

Hawks soar to higher altitudes; 76ers tumble

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Dominique Wilkins scored 45 points, 33 in the second half, as the Atlanta Hawks came back from 17-point first-half deficit and defeated the Philadelphia 76ers 106-100 Friday night.

Atlanta played without starter Kevin Willis, who missed his third straight game with an injured right knee, and Antoine Carr, who was to start in place of Willis.

Carr shattered a backboard with a slam dunk during pregame warmups and was suspended for the game under National Basketball Association (NBA) rules. The start of the game was delayed one hour to replace the back-

board. Philadelphia held a 25-8 lead late in the first quarter, and led 35-19 with 10:21 left in the second period. However, Atlanta rallied behind Wilkins and moved ahead to stay 49-47 on a layup by Cliff Levingston with 10:51 left in the third quarter.

Wilkins scored 18 points in the third period, and got Atlanta's first six points in the fourth quarter, leading the Hawks to a 92-84 advantage with 5:13 remaining. The 76ers then scored 10 of the game's next 14 points and a jumper by Cliff Robinson cut the Hawks lead to 96-94 with 1:50 to go.

Disabled skiing pro team preparing for competition

PURGATORY, Colorado (AP) — Dan Ashbaugh has been hard at work here with 20 other ski racers on the U.S. disabled ski team training for world ski competition next month at Innsbruck, Austria.

Ashbaugh, 24, suffered a spinal cord injury from a backyard accident that left him a partial paraplegic with no feeling below his knees. That was in 1979 when he was 16.

Purgatory is one of three training camps used this season by the team to prepare for the Fourth Winter World Championships for the disabled. They trained earlier at Keystone and will train together again next month at Attitash near Bartlett.

The 90 staff and team members will travel to Austria for the international competition involving more than 20 countries Jan. 16-26.

Microlight pilot vows to continue record attempt after Gulf crash

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — A British microlight pilot rescued from the Gulf after a Christmas day crash plans to continue his attempt to travel from London to Australia in 30 flying days.

Brian Milton told Reuters he was in the water for 25 minutes on Friday before being rescued by helicopter after Abu Dhabi air traffic control picked up his "mayday" distress call.

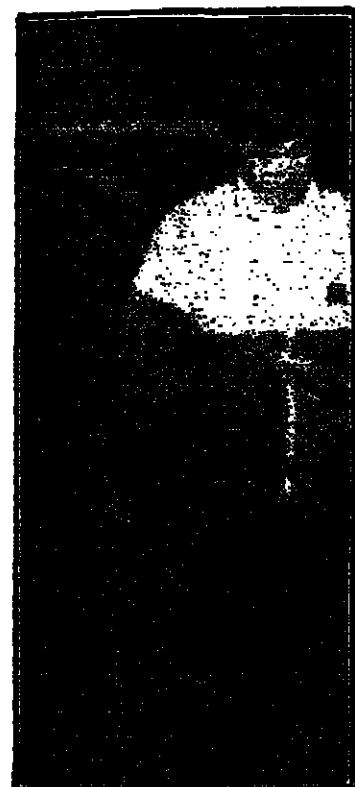
"I was afraid at first but it did not take much time for the helicopters to arrive," he said in a telephone interview from Abu Dhabi airport.

Milton, who left London on Dec. 7 in the 150 kilogramme dalgery flier, said his plane was still afloat and two boats were trying to retrieve it.

"When they bring it back we will change the engine and I will fly off."

He said he took off for Abu Dhabi from Dhahran in Saudi Arabia at 7:15 a.m. (0415 GMT) in fine weather. He had 20 gallons of fuel, enough to take him to the Gulf emirate.

"After five hours of flight and about 35 miles northwest of Abu Dhabi the engine stopped with all the symptoms of running out of fuel."



Brian Milton

The plane dived 2,000 feet (650 metres) into the sea but hit the water very gently, he said, and sustained little damage.

"It seems the engine consumed

more fuel than the gauge showed. I estimated I had at least four gallons of fuel left."

He said a nearby tanker ignored his predicament.

Milton was first taken to an oil platform in the nearby upper Zakkum field and then flown to Abu Dhabi. He said he would fly to Muscat after his aircraft was repaired to continue his journey to Australia.

Milton, a former journalist and hang-gliding instructor, had engine problems a week ago and was forced to land his tiny orange-and-white plane on a road in Karak, some 200 kilometres south of Amman.

Jordanian maintenance crew and medical teams flew to his rescue in military helicopters from Amman and repaired the microlight plane.

His Majesty King Hussein later received the British Pilot who briefed the King and his Royal Highness Prince Abdullah on his plans. Milton left London's New Docklands airport on Dec. 7 en route to Australia in 30 days to commemorate a 1919 air race. But high winds flipped his \$24,570 plane over after a landing on the Greek island Kythera, causing a six day delay.

Turning the tide for the Chicago Bears

Coach hopes to regain old-fashioned momentum

NEW YORK (AP) — Mike Ditka is hoping a major shakeup of his lineup will take the blur out of the Chicago Bears' team picture heading into postseason play.

The complete playoff picture will be in focus after this final weekend of regular-season National Football League (NFL) games, which began Saturday with Cleveland at Pittsburgh and Washington at Minnesota.

Chicago, 10-4, has clinched its fourth consecutive NFC Central title. But the Bears head into Sunday's road game with the Los Angeles Raiders off disturbingly decisive losses to San Francisco (41-0) and Seattle (34-21).

"That's the kind of continuity I don't need any more of," said Ditka, who announced earlier this week he was demoting five starters. "I just want to get back some of that old-fashioned continuity where you line up and knock somebody's jock off."

"We need to get things rolling this week. You can look back in history and see the teams that did well in the playoffs went in with some momentum. We need to get

our confidence back and not beat ourselves."

On Sunday, besides the Bears and Raiders, Tampa Bay will play at Indianapolis, Buffalo at Philadelphia, Cincinnati at Houston, Detroit at Atlanta, Green Bay at New Orleans, the New York Jets at New York Giants, St. Louis at Dallas, Seattle at Kansas City, San Diego at Denver and the Los Angeles Rams at San Francisco Sunday night.

Monday night's game will send New England to Miami.

The Bears need a victory against the Raiders to get at least one home game in the playoffs. Going into the game against Los Angeles, 5-9 and going nowhere, Ditka has benched defensive tackle William "refrigerator" Perry, safety Todd Bell and cornerback Mike Richardson, as well as offensive left tackle Paul Blair and right guard Tom Thayer.

Richardson lost his starting assignment to second-year player Maurice Douglass, while Perry's slot will be taken by end Dan Hampton, who has been slowed

by knee surgery. Hampton's spot will be filled by Al Harris.

John Wojciechowski replaces Blair and Kurt Becker will start in place of Thayer.

Besides the demotions, full-back Matt Suhey and Linebacker Ron Rivera step into starting spots because of injuries to Neal Anderson and Otis Wilson.

The game also will mark the final regular-season appearance for Walter Payton, the NFL's all-time leading rusher. And Bell's demotion allows Gary Fencik, Chicago's all-time leader in tackles and interceptions, to start in the final regular-season game of his career. He will be back at free safety as Dave Duerson switches back to strong safety.

The last time the teams played, Bears quarterback Jim McMahon was knocked out for the 1984 season. McMahon, still resting a hamstring injury suffered several weeks ago, will miss Sunday's game.

"I still think this team can do well, but I would feel better going into the playoffs with a good performance," Ditka said.

Ditka said injuries "seem to

mount when you're losing. I feel we'll have everyone back for the playoffs. Neal (Anderson) is a concern, but we'll know more on him later. I feel McMahon and (offensive tackle Jim) covert should be ok for the playoffs. It's part of the game — you just have to try to overcome them the best you can."

The Raiders, who also have lost two in a row, likely will play without rookie running back Bo Jackson, who suffered a sprained ankle against Kansas City on Dec. 13. Jackson is listed as questionable.

The Colts, who have not been in the playoffs since 1977, can win the AFC East by beating Tampa Bay.

"Emotions can have a negative effect as well as positive effect," said Indiana coach Ron Meyer. "I like to see emotion build with good, solid execution during the game. We're not going to write a new fight song or cheer for this game in practice."

Nine of the 14 AFC teams entered the final weekend of the tumultuous, strike-marred regular season with a chance for playoff berths.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Nupsala upsets favourites

KEMPTON, England (AP) — Outsider Nupsala upset the favoured horses with a breathtaking burst of speed to give France its first ever victory in the King George VI rank chase Saturday. Ridden by Andre Pommier, the 25 to 1 shot gradually clawed his way back into the race before effortlessly pulling clear on the home front. The 8-year-old Nupsala's victory was sealed when challenging Forgive 'n Forget fell at the last fence, leaving race favourite Desert Orchid, which had led much for the race, to take second place in front of Golden Friend. Desert Orchid, last year's winner, was bidding to become the sixth horse to win the race twice. "My biggest worry was the fast start but he's a clever horse and has a very good turn of foot," said Nupsala trainer Francois Doumen.

Shriver heads Ariadne field

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — American Pam Shriver heads the entry list for the \$150,000 Ariadne Women's Classic, which begins Monday on the grass courts of the Milton Tennis centre. The tournament is a lead-up event for the Australian Open, which begins Jan. 11 in Melbourne. The Ariadne's top eight seeds have all drawn first-round byes. Besides Shriver, the top seeds are Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia, Claudia Kohde-Kilsch and Sylvia Hanika of West Germany, Australians Dianne Balestrat, Wendy Turnbull and Liz Smylie and Etsuko Inoue of Japan. Australian schoolgirl Kerry-Anne Guse, 14, who was given a wild card entry, faces experienced Pascal Paradis of France in her opener. Another Australian wild card recipient, Sally McCann, will meet 14th-seeded Briton Jo Durie in the first round of the 56-draw Virginia Slims series event. American Ros Fairbank, the ninth seed, faces Patricia Hy of Hong Kong in her opener, while 10th-seeded Australian Anne Minter will play New Zealander Belinda Cordwell.



ANNOUNCEMENT

SUPPLEMENT ADDENDUM No. 1

Jordan Phosphate Mines Company announces the issuance of supplement for tender No. 24F/87 (power distribution system).

We request participants in the above mentioned tender to contact supplies chief bureau at general offices in Amman to obtain their copies of the said supplement.

Wasef Azar
Managing Director

JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES CO. LTD.

INVITATION TO TENDER

No. 25F/87

JPMC announces the invitation to tender No. (25F/87) for 3,000,000 MTR (three million meters of cortex detonating fuses).

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman supply department until 2:00 p.m. local time Thursday 7 Jan. 1988. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD (25) for each set of tender documents, and free for former participants.

The closing date for submission tenders is 12:00 hours local time Thursday 14 Jan. 1988.

Wasef Azar
Managing Director



Opportunities For DP PROFESSIONALS

DBA, DB supervisors, systems analysts, engineers, programmers
Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company wishes to appoint experienced DP professionals (as described below) to participate in the development of its computerisation project using DEC/VAX (VMS), integrated MIS, LBMS Structured Methodology, Relational DBMS, structured COBOL & 4GL and on-line-distributed business applications.

- Database Administrator: To plan and direct all DB activities, ensure good organisation & utilisation of the DB, assist the DP manager in all his work and duties, manage the training programme for computer and user staff. Minimum 8 years experience in analysis and programming of different business applications, at least 3 of them in managing DB activities.
- Database Supervisor: To participate in logical and physical DB design, setting performance criteria, design security and privacy rules and controls, supervise DB activities, install DBMS package, etc. Minimum 7 years experience in analysis and programming of different applications, at least 2 of them in relational DB design.
- Business Systems Analysts: To understand user requirements, document system operations using advanced techniques, work closely with end-users in an integrated DB environment. Minimum 5 years in DP+training in system analysis and design techniques.
- Computer Engineers: To work with VAX/VMS operating system and utilities, data communications network and software, computer operations. Experience in VAX/VMS, DecNET, system programming is preferable.
- Programmers: University degree in computer science, knowledge in business information systems is preferable.

SALARIES WILL BE CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS.

Candidates are requested to specify and forward not later than Jan. 30, 1988.

To: **PERSONNEL DEPT.**
Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company Ltd.
P.O. Box 1079, Amman
Jordan.

INSTRUCTORS WANTED

The Noor Al-Hussein Foundation is seeking to employ instructors/teachers of weaving, textiles, ceramics and pottery at the handicraft centre in Salt. Selected applicants will attend a training course for six months at the centre conducted by Italian experts. Participants will be granted to those not residing Salt. Upon completion of the course, a number of candidates will be appointed as instructors/ teachers at the centre. Further training opportunities will be available in Italy. Qualification:

- Applicants should hold one of the following:
 - B.A. in art (experience in teaching is an asset)
 - Community college diploma in art with at least two years experience in teaching.
 or be:
 - A specialised artisan with extensive practical experience in weaving, textiles, ceramics and pottery with at least a preparatory education.
 - A specialised artisan with experience in weaving, textiles, ceramics and pottery.
- Command of English is a must.
- Italian language is an asset.

Application forms are available at the offices of Noor Al-Hussein Foundation, Housing Bank Complex, 12 floor, or at the Salt Development Corporation in Salt.

Applications should be submitted by December 30, 1987.

BUY TWO DRINKS GET THE THIRD FREE



During Christmas and New Year
from 24 till 31 of December 1987

ALKHAIMA BAR

Hotel Jerusalem
International
تلفون 665121

Cinema CONCORD

Tel: 677420

PREDATOR



Performances 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema OPERA

Tel: 675573

VENDETTA



Performances 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema PLAZA

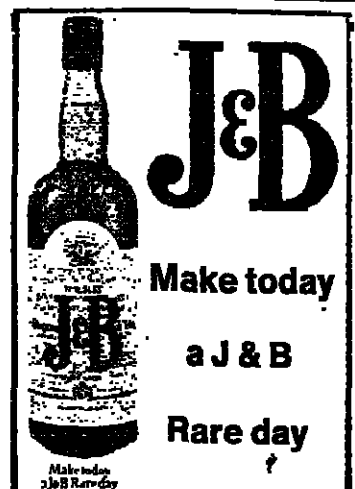
Tel: 677420

NO MERCY



Performances 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

سكنيا منة لال



NEWS IN BRIEF

Algeria resumes gas sales to U.S.

ALGIERS (OPECNA) — Algeria resumed gas sales last week to the United States from its Arzew field, east of here. According to the Algerian news agency, a contract was signed recently between the Algerian state national oil company Sonatrach and the U.S. Cabot consortium. Algeria, the world's fourth largest gas producer after the Soviet Union, Holland and Canada, produced 40 billion cubic metres of gas last year, of which 25 billion cubic metres was exported. With natural gas reserves of three trillion cubic metres, most of Algerian production comes from Hassi R'mel, one of the world's largest gasfields.

GCC oil revenues rise to \$37.6 billion

MANAMA (OPECNA) — Oil revenues of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have increased by 6.7 per cent this year, compared with a year earlier. Quoting banking statistics in the region, the Manama-based Gulf News Agency said GCC oil revenues increased from \$35.30 billion in 1986 to over \$37.60 billion this year due to oil price stability. The revenues increased despite the fact that the average aggregate production by the six Gulf states reached 6.86 million barrels per day this year against 8.20 million barrels per day last year. The report added that oil revenues declined from \$59.30 billion in 1984 to \$50.70 billion in 1985 after the drop in oil prices.

Qatar reduces agricultural imports

DOHA (OPECNA) — Qatar's 1986 agricultural production reached a value of \$87.30 million, it was reported here. A report by the ministry of industry and agriculture said that the following proportion of the country's needs for agricultural products was grown locally: Cereals (6.3 per cent), fodder (11.8 per cent), dates (71.3 per cent) and vegetables (9.9 per cent). It also showed a drop in agricultural imports, thanks to an increase in local production. Qatar imported 95,936 tonnes of cereals last year against 105,449 tonnes in 1985, the report said, noting that cereals provided 21.4 per cent of the value of agricultural income in Qatar. Vegetables accounted for (23.3 per cent), meat (13.2 per cent), milk and dairy products (27.9 per cent), eggs (2.2 per cent), fish (4.9 per cent), and fruits and dates (6.6 per cent).

Indonesian tyre exports earn \$10.3m

JAKARTA (OPECNA) — The value of Indonesian tyre exports reached nearly \$10.3 million in 1986, an increase of about 30 per cent over 1985. A report released here by the Association of Indonesian Tyre Manufacturers said the biggest tyre exporter during the period was the Gajah Tunggal Company with exports of \$5.71 million. Indonesian tyres, it said, now had access to 36 countries including Malaysia, India, Australia, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and China. Production of four-wheel vehicle tyres in the last three years had shown a sharp increase particularly last year, when the figure was over 4.9 million tyres.

Inter-Continental named best hotel

NEW YORK (Agencies) — For a fourth consecutive year, Inter-Continental has been named "best hotel chain" by the readers of Britain's Business Traveller Magazine. New York-based Inter-Continental, which operates 100 hotels on six continents, is known for its outstanding services and facilities for international executives.

Business Traveller's recent survey involved frequent international business travellers from more than 50 countries. The magazine is published monthly and circulated throughout Europe to a target market of senior executives.

"The fact that the Inter-Continental hotel chain has come out on top of its category for the fourth year in a row confirms that it is maintaining the standards at put it there in the first place," said Mr. Graham Boyne, editor of the magazine. Inter-Continental's 100 hotels

are concentrated in major business and resort destinations in 48 countries around the world. An estimated 85 per cent of the company's guests are travelling on business. To meet the needs of this key market, which it has served since 1946, Inter-Continental has developed special services and programmes. In all its hotels, including 24 hour room service, same-day laundry and valet service and modern conference and banquet facilities. Many Inter-Continental hotels provide fully-equipped business centres that serve as "office away from the office," business studios, guestrooms that convert into offices for small meetings, complimentary limousine transportation to and from the airport, airline check-in counters in the hotel lobby, and more. Inter-Continental also offers one of the industry's most generous and comprehensive frequent traveller programme, "Inter-Continental Rewards."

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

AMMAN (J.T.) — The following table summarises trading activities at the Amman Financial Market during the week starting Saturday, Dec. 19, '87 and ending Wednesday, Dec. 23, '87. (Figures in Jordanian dinars).

Name of company	Number of shares	Volume of trade	Opening price	Closing price	Par value
Banking and financial institutions					
Industrial Development Bank	—	—	—	—	1,000
Petra Bank	25047	54107	2.060	2.170	1,000
Jordan Islamic Bank	1987	3722	1.900	1.870	1,000
Jordan Kuwait Bank	11973	20096	1.680	1.660	1,000
Jordan Gulf Bank	3924	4990	1.280	1.270	1,000
Housing Bank	5047	8580	1.700	1.700	1,000
Arab Jordan Investment Bank	—	—	—	—	1,000
Bank of Jordan	1955	44391	22.100	21.750	5,000
Arab Bank	5971	99878	16.900	16.600	5,000
Jordan National Bank	1200	145647	121.500	122.000	10,000
Jordan Finance House for Development	10846	27675	2.550	2.550	1,000
Jordan Investment and Finance Corporation	2995	3395	1.100	1.100	1,000
Finance and Credit Corporation	8570	11179	1.800	1.810	1,000
National Financial Investments	95168	60349	0.600	0.650	1,000
National Portfolio Securities	2150	3571	1.640	1.680	1,000
Arab Finance Corporation (Jordan)	4578	3325	0.730	0.720	1,000
Real Estate Financing Corporation	1242	18791	15.000	15.400	2,000
Al Masrah Exchange	—	—	—	—	10,000
Insurance and reinsurance					
Jordan French Insurance	17442	115514	6.310	6.700	1,000
REFCO Life Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Insurance	225	3103	13.500	13.650	1,000
Arab Life and Accident Insurance	1400	1364	1.000	0.980	1,000
Yarmouk Insurance and Reinsurance	1000	1040	1.010	1.040	1,000
Holy Land Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Philadelpia Insurance	2800	1963	0.720	0.700	1,000
Arab Union International Insurance	50	46	0.900	0.910	1,000
Jerusalem Insurance	6450	8982	1.410	1.410	1,000
Jordan-Gulf Insurance	650	657	1.010	1.010	1,000
Universal Insurance	24350	22302	0.940	0.850	1,000
General Insurance	26386	58712	1.800	2.630	1,000
Jordan Eagle Insurance	—	—	—	—	10,000
Middle East Insurance	—	—	—	—	10,000
Al-Izhar Insurance	84	65	0.770	0.770	1,000
National Ahliya Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab Belgian Insurance and Reinsurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Services and industries					
General Investments	600	941	1.480	1.630	1,000
Imna for Investment and Financial Facilities	181154	131724	0.660	0.730	1,000
Darco for Housing and Investment	15811	6992	0.450	0.440	1,000
Real Estate Investment (Aqarco)	18356	9280	0.480	0.450	1,000
Jordan Leasing Corporation	261	167	0.640	0.640	1,000
Petra Enterprises and Leasing Equipments	15127	1513	0.600	0.600	1,000
Equipment Leasing & Maintenance/Ta'jeero	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordanian Electric Power	10941	16986	1.540	1.560	1,000
Irbit District Electricity	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab International Hotels	—	—	—	—	1,000
Hotels and Tourism	—	—	—	—	1,000
Garage Owners Federation Office	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan National Shipping Lines	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Press Foundation	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Press and Publishing	100	211	2.110	2.110	1,000
Dar Al Shaab Press, Printing and Publishing	11000	3305	0.310	0.300	1,000
Jordan Dairy	4210	4411	1.040	1.070	1,000
Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing	14081	30336	2.190	2.130	1,000
Intermediate Petrochemical Industries	94158	103107	1.100	1.090	1,000
Jordan Phosphate Mines	16103	45254	2.500	2.500	1,000
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural (Intaj)	1151	1657	1.470	1.440	1,000
Arab Chemical Detergent Industries	6950	36502	5.300	5.300	1,000
Aladdin Industries	187945	221863	1.150	1.140	1,000
Arab Aluminium Manufacturing	88952	164578	1.830	1.850	1,000
Jordan Worsteds Mills	2286	10831	4.660	4.760	1,000
Jordan Ceramics	5066	5421	1.080	1.070	1,000
Chemical Industries	5051	6314	1.280	1.230	1,000
Jordan Industries and Match (JIMCO)	17400	11781	0.690	0.680	1,000
Real Estate Development and Investment	5413	8053	1.500	1.490	1,000
National Steel Industries	1200	33527	2.800	2.780	1,000
Universal Chemical Industries	100843	139294	1.270	1.290	1,000
General Mining	100	150	1.550	1.500	1,000
Jordan Petroleum Refinery	9362	70319	7.550	7.500	5,000
Jordan Lime & Brick	64600	9601	0.160	0.150	1,000
National Industries	1420	710	0.510	0.500	1,000
Arab Paper Converting and Trading	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Wooden Industries (JWICO)	—	—	—	—	1,000
Livestock and Poultry	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Pipes Manufacturing	7436	9073	1.230	1.220	1,000
Rafia Industrial for Plastic Bags	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Paper and Cardboard	5117	16582	3.300	3.180	1,000
Jordan Rockwool Industries	8375	5183	0.620	0.610	1,000
Trans-Jordan Minerals Research	100	60	0.600	0.600	1,000
Jordan Himeh Mineral	—	—	—	—	1,000
Orient Dry Batteries Factory	—	—	—	—	1,000
Woolen Industries	6450	4628	0.700	0.740	1,000
Jordan Tanning	245	502	2.150	2.050	1,000
Jordan Printing and Packaging	50	730	14.600	14.600	1,000
Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette	—	—	—	—	1,000
Mas Industries	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab Center for Pharmaceuticals & Chemicals	—	—	—	—	1,000
National Cable & Wire Manufacturing	1200	1104	0.930	0.920	1,000
Jordan Spinning & Weaving	55116	53070	0.970	0.960	1,000
Jordan Sulpho Chemicals	50128	146750	3.180	3.190	1,000
Jordan Cement Factories	63242	65772	1.040	1.040	1,000
Jordan Glass Industries	1000	903	0.910	0.900	1,000
Grand total	1,352,411	2,097,552			

China reports first trade surplus in four years

BEIJING (Agencies) — China in 1987 achieved its first trade surplus in four years due to a crackdown on imports and new incentives to companies to export their products, the trade minister said Friday.

The official Xinhua News Agency quoted Mr. Zheng Tuobin, minister of foreign economic relations and trade, as estimating China exported \$34 billion worth of goods for the year and imported \$30 billion worth.

Exports from January through November were up more than 14 per cent over the same period of 1986, he said, while imports fell slightly.

In 1986, China had a trade deficit of \$5.7 billion. It last enjoyed a surplus in 1983.

For most of the nearly four decades of communist rule, China has maintained trade surpluses due to strict central controls over the economy. However, the emphasis in recent years on catching up with the developed world has led to heavy imports of modern machinery and technology, while world prices for China's traditional exports of raw materials have fallen.

Mr. Zheng was quoted as saying much of the growth in exports has been in finished products, with overseas sales of machinery and electrical products up more than 48 per cent over last year.

He said China narrowed its deficit with its no. 1 trade partner, Japan, and ran a surplus in trade with the United States. Exports to Japan rose to \$5.4 billion and those to the United States reached \$2.6 billion. He did not give import figures.

The United States is China's third largest trade partner, after Japan and Hong Kong.

China's bilateral trade statistics do not include goods shipped to third countries via Hong Kong, and thus are lower than figures provided by its trade partners.

The U.S. Commerce Department estimated Chinese exports in 1986 at \$5.2 billion and imports from the United States at \$3.1 billion.

Japanese trade surplus declines

TOKYO (R) — While Japan's trade surplus is not vanishing, trade figures for November show the money mountain earned from export trade is steadily declining.

November figures from the ministry of finance, released on Saturday, showed the monthly surplus dropped sharply to \$6.64 billion from \$8.50 billion a year ago.

The country's current account, the balance of all trade in goods, services and invisible earnings, also fell, to \$5.79 billion from \$8.14 billion in November 1986.

The current account surplus

has now fallen for seven consecutive months, and should continue to do so, ministry officials said. Imports continued high, they told reporters.

Japan also releases customs-cleared trade statistics, which can differ slightly from ministry statistics.

If the steady decline continues, economists believe that international pressure on Japan to do more to cut its export-driven trade surpluses will also decline.

Already, U.S. attention is shifting to criticism of the newly industrialised nations of Taiwan,

Some factories imported equipment from different countries which they discovered could not work together. Others were completed five years behind schedule, when market demand had changed and no-one wanted their goods.

The bank said such factories should be closed immediately, be taken over by others, or switch to different products.

China's Financial Times said in an editorial that low efficiency was a "chronic disease" which every year wasted huge amounts of extremely scarce investment capital.

It said the way forward was to change the present system under which there was no relation between the department that approved financing and the firm that carried it out.

Authority must be devolved so that the firm putting up a new factory bore the investment risk and was subject to the test of market competition, it said.

The official press regularly gives examples of how the current situation produces economic distortions.

China Daily said factories nationwide would by 1990 produce more than 10 million vacuum cleaners for a market needing only three million. Factories have rushed into this line because of low production costs and quick profits, it said.

The light industry ministry reported that China would need 30 million bicycles by 1990 but production this year alone would exceed 40 million — although consumers cannot get the premium brands they want.

Despite price increases for premium brands over the last year, supply cannot meet demand, while unwanted low-grade brands lie gathering dust, the People's Daily said.

The ministry proposed that the factories making the top brands take over those making the low grades as the best way to raise output of premium brands and cut production of the unsaleable models.

South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore whose currencies have not risen against the dollar as much as the yen has.

Japan's November figures support the contention of Japanese officials that efforts to switch economic growth away from exports and onto domestic-led demand are working.

Last week, the ministry announced a new budget draft for fiscal 1988, beginning April 1, which allowed the first rise in spending for six years, the bulk of it on domestic public works projects.

THE Daily Crossword by Samuel K. Flegner

ACROSS

- Mont Blanc locale
- Ponds
- Hearty's partner
- Ring match
- "Hall"
- Pig
- Concerning
- Tax state tree
- Anatomical
- Issue
- Monitor
- Nikola
- Goat antelope
- Pallid
- A Hemingway
- Home of 13D
- Naval officer
- Behind in payment
- Chop
- Regale
- Actress
- Keston
- Ivy League member
- Ship deck
- Where Gobi is
- Revitalize
- Phylian king
- Shade tree
- Walking
- Do without
- Property
- Sp. lady
- Section
- Parents
- Qatars
- Muslim faith
- Br. composer
- Intelligent
- Arab bread
- Courage
- Director
- Polaris
- Southeast
- Wet
- Bergen's
- Mortimer
- Time out

DOWN

- Let up
- Also-ran
- Swamp
- Singles
- Almost never
- Mythomania
- Sp. lady
- White House
- 2nd chance in a way
- Ms. Falana
- Abbr.
- Helper: abbr.
- Hospital area
- Novice: var.
- Silkworm
- Microbe
- Indigo plant
- Paper
- measure
- Injection for short
- Mort
- Bustle
- Adam's grandson
- Golf scores
- Kindergarten
- Brilliant pref.
- Candle
- One of the
- Magi
- Claw
- Rendezvous
- Intelligent
- Icelandic
- Wild ox
- Top performer
- Clayeyance
- Objective

Peanuts



Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ESSOU

RODOB

CLOWAL

STRUME

THE DISTURBED ROBOT WENT TO THE SHIRINK BECAUSE HE HAD THIS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A

Horoscope not received

Managua accuses contras of breaking Christmas truce

MANAGUA (R) — Nicaragua has accused U.S.-backed guerrillas of violating a Christmas ceasefire seven times but the contras insist they have held their fire.

The Defence Ministry said in a statement on Christmas Day that 10 contras and one government soldier had been killed and five government troops wounded in seven rebel attacks since the ceasefire began at midnight on Wednesday (0600 GMT on Thursday).

Rebel leaders based in other parts of Central America dismissed as propaganda claims by the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front that the contras had broken the truce. U.S. diplomats in the region did not report any violations.

"Our men have held their fire. It's just another example of anti-contra propaganda by the Sandinistas," contra spokeswoman Adela Icaza told Reuters by telephone from a Central American country she did not want named.

The Defence Ministry said government troops would abide by the ceasefire until it expired at midnight on Christmas Day (0600 GMT on Saturday) unless attacked.

Diplomats in the capital Managua said the incidents, if they had in fact occurred, could either have been the result of poor communications between contra field patrols and their leaders, or "just the actions of some renegade officers."

The 48-hour ceasefire had been suggested by the Roman Catholic Church, whose Cardinal Miguel Obando Y Bravo is acting as mediator in peace talks between the two sides. It was the first ceasefire agreement between the government and the rebels in the six-year-war which has killed more than 40,000 Nicaraguans.

The Defence Ministry statement said the contras, organised and financed by the United States, first broke the ceasefire only 30 minutes into Christmas Eve with an attack on troops in Colonia San Jose, near Nueva Guinea.

Army Lieutenant Carlos Lara told reporters that government forces would abide by the ceasefire until midnight on Christmas

Day. "The order remains as before. Do not attack. Only defend if attacked," Lt. Lara said.

Diplomats in Central America said the severity of the incidents listed by Managua was hard to judge. Some said their overall impression was that the truce had been "largely a success, giving some hope for future peace moves."

A second round of peace talks, which stem from the peace accord signed by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and four other Central American leaders last August, collapsed last Tuesday in the Dominican Republic when the contras objected to foreigners appointed to the government delegation.

Local media and a member of a cattle cooperative reported three attacks Thursday in which two contras died.

State-run Radio Revolucion said contra and Sandinista troops battled near the strategic Rama Road, used for transport of supplies. The radio reported three dead contras and two wounded in the battles.

The opposition newspaper La Prensa said in its Thursday night edition that heavy fighting was reported in the northern province of Madriz.

Soviet ties with U.K. best since war — TASS

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet-British relations are better than they have been since the end of the World War II, the official Soviet News Agency TASS said on Saturday in a year-end commentary.

The improvement was due partly to Britain's recognition of the role Western Europe had to play in nuclear disarmament, TASS said in the article by its London correspondent.

"This was underlined at the Soviet-British meeting at Brize-Norton, which marked the positive role that the British government played in reaching the Soviet-American treaty on liquidating medium and short-range nuclear rockets," TASS said.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev stopped for two hours at Britain's Royal Air Force base at Brize-Norton on Dec. 7 to meet Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher before continuing on his way to the superpower summit.

During his meeting with Mr. Gorbachev, Mrs. Thatcher praised the missile treaty he was to sign with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and urged East-West agreements on other categories of arms, including chemical, conventional and space weapons.

But she said Britain's small nuclear arsenal would not be reduced until the superpowers had made drastic cuts in their stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons.

The TASS article did not mention Britain's nuclear weapons. TASS said Mr. Gorbachev's meetings with Mrs. Thatcher at Brize-Norton and in Moscow earlier this year had proved "especially fruitful" for relations between the two countries.

"After many years of stagnation in bilateral ties, a period of animated exchanges has come," the commentary said.

Only 133 bodies found in Philippine sea tragedy

MANILA (R) — A six-day search for corpses in history's worst peacetime sea disaster has yielded only 133 bodies, the Philippine Coast Guard said on Saturday.

Spokesman Lieutenant-Commander Rene Luspao corrected a previous count of 253 released by his office, saying "there had been a double counting, in some cases even triple counting" of the bodies.

About 2,000 people are believed to have died when the ferry Dona Paz and a small tanker collided and sank off central Mindoro Island last Sunday. Only 26 are known to have survived.

Lt. Col. Luspao said four navy ships and several commercial vessels continued a search that could last several more days.

A coast guard board opens a formal inquiry on Monday. Owners of the Dona Paz, quoting what they said were survivors' accounts, have accused the tanker of ramming the luxury liner.

The Manila Chronicle newspaper on Saturday quoted Salvador Bascas, a Dona Paz passenger who survived, as saying it was the liner that struck the tanker.

Gephardt on Hart: Private life should be private

WASHINGTON (AP) — Representative Richard Gephardt, asked about Gary Hart's re-entry into the Democratic presidential race, said in an interview broadcast Saturday he does not think presidential candidates ought to answer "every conceivable question any human being can concoct."

Mr. Hart abandoned his campaign in May amid reports about his relationship with a Miami model, and since re-entering the field earlier this month, has refused to answer questions about his private life.

"I don't think that a lot of your private life is terribly relevant to whether or not you would be a good president," the contender for the Democratic presidential nomination said in an interview with David Frost. "An awful lot of it is... an inquiry that people don't really want to know about or need to know about."

The interview with the Missouri congressman, which also was published in the Jan. 4 editions of U.S. News and World Report, touched on the issue of trade.

Mr. Gephardt, who sponsored a trade amendment many feel is protectionist, was asked whether

the Japanese make better cars.

"In many ways they do," he said. "All the best-rated cars (in a consumer magazine) were Japanese. All the worst-rated cars were American. That's not a good sign."

Meanwhile Mr. Hart's request for about \$1 million in government campaign funds should be approved, a federal elections commission panel has recommended, according to reports published Friday.

The commission's audit division made the recommendation Thursday, according to the Denver Post and the New York Times.

The six-member commission has until Tuesday to approve, and campaign organisers expect it will receive up to \$1.2 million starting in January, the Post said.

The Times said the funds would be slightly less than \$1 million.

The matching funds are based on \$2.1 million the campaign collected before Mr. Hart withdrew from the race in May.

The commission has not ruled on whether the campaign could use any 1988 matching funds to pay creditors from Mr. Hart's 1984 presidential bid.

Christmas brings respite to world hotspots

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Peace reigned in Bethlehem on Christmas Day. Pope John Paul II blessed the faithful around the world and Queen Elizabeth II used her Christmas message to condemn terrorism.

Israeli army officials in the West Bank city of Bethlehem said Friday were no reports of violence following two weeks of Palestinian protests. The army had clamped heavy security on Christmas Eve festivities, deploying hundreds of soldiers, but most troops had been pulled out by Christmas morning.

Although their numbers were thinned by fears of violence and by blustery, wet weather, dozens of pilgrims crowded into the gold-brocaded grotto of the Church of Nativity, singing hymns by candlelight and kneeling in prayer at the altar.

Only about 2,500 tourists — fewer than half of last year's turnout — attended midnight mass at the church's St. Catherine's Basilica.

At London's Buckingham Palace, the queen broke a royal tradition in her annual Christmas broadcast by focusing not on home and family but on the horrors of terrorism.

"It is only too easy for passionate loyalty to one's own country, race or religion, or even to one's favourite football club, to be corroded into intolerance, bigotry and ultimately into violence," the 61-year-old monarch said.

From the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope John Paul delivered his traditional Christmas Day statement.

"He who for us and for our salvation came down from the father, became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was made man," the Pontiff said. "He has given this power to us men. And this is the power of Christmas."

Pope John Paul said the message of Christmas transcends the ages and is fitting today. He wished "Merry Christmas" in 52 languages and bestowed blessings.

In the Gulf, U.S. troops got a cheerful boost from comedian Bob Hope, who took his road show to the amphibious assault ship USS Okinawa.

Dec. 25 was just another working day in the Soviet Union, where the officially atheist state has transferred most holiday traditions to the New Year's celebration.

New Year's trees went on sale at street bazaars just a few days

ago, and Muscovites spent Friday lining up at crowded stores and poorly stocked liquor shops to prepare for their big holiday next week.

Thousands of Christians celebrated the holiday at the 10 Christian churches in Peking.

In New York, a 5-year-old boy playing with Christmas presents among family and friends was killed by a bullet fired through a window of his apartment, police said.

The shot, apparently fired from a housing project building across the street, passed through the metal window frame of the Bronx apartment Friday afternoon and went through the boy's head, police Lt. Stephen Davis said.

Jose Diaz died at a hospital about an hour later.

Jose was playing with new toys in the apartment living room when he was shot, Davis said.

Erick Donis, Jose's 6-year-old playmate, said the shot "sounded like a balloon."

"When I turned around I saw all the blood on the floor," he said. "I was crying. I just turned around from there and ran out the door."

Neighbours said Jose's mother and four siblings were in the apartment while the boy's father was at work.

Detectives had not yet pinpointed the source of the apparently high-powered gunshot, Davis said.

The killing was the second shooting of a Bronx child this Christmas.

Police said it did not appear to be related to the shooting in the leg earlier in the day of an 11-year-old girl who was entering a store in the south Bronx.

The girl, whose name was not released, was admitted to a hospital for treatment of a wound in the left calf, police Sgt. Maurice Howard said.

In Spokane, Washington, a priest suffered a fatal heart attack in front of 400 people while delivering his Christmas mass sermon, the church pastor said.

The Rev. Frank Harrington, 78, was taken from St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church at Gonzaga University to Sacred Heart Medical Centre, where he died of cardiac arrest, a nursing supervisor said.

"Father Harrington was at the end of his homily, and he simply passed out at his pulpit," said the pastor, the Rev. Thomas Royce, who was standing with the choir at the time. "A deacon and several parishioners rushed to help

4 die during Indian politician's funeral

MADRAS, India (AP) — At least four people have died when police fired on frenzied mourners, trying to get a last glimpse of India's top Tamil leader, witnesses said.

About a million mourners, wailing and beating their chests in sorrow, chanted "long live MGR," as Marudur Gopalan Ramachandran's sandalwood coffin was lowered into a grave by the Bay of Bengal.

Police fired tear gas and clubbed some people to control the crowd. When some of the mourners went into a frenzy trying to get a last glimpse of Mr. Ramachandran, police opened fire.

Witnesses and hospital sources said at least four mourners were shot to death and 16 were wounded. Area Police Chief Irudaya

in the mob violence.

Das told the Associated Press that 47 policemen were wounded. A granite block was placed on the grave where a memorial will be built to the 70-year-old former movie actor, popularly known as "MGR."

Mr. Ramachandran, chief minister of southern Tamil Nadu state, died of cardiac arrest Thursday.

His state is home to about 50 million of India's minority Tamils. Like most Tamils, Mr. Ramachandran was a Hindu. Hindus customarily cremate their dead, but Tamil Hindus bury those considered "immortal leaders."

"We believe that immortal leaders should be buried and not cremated so that people can feel their presence," said Ananta

Swaminathan, a Tamil scholar.

More than 3,500 paramilitary troops were brought into Madras, the state capital, to prevent violence, a police official said.

At least 18 people have died in violence connected with Mr. Ramachandran's death, police said.

In a separate development, tribal rebels stormed a north east Indian village on Friday night, killing a Bengali family of six with automatic fire and bayonetting other settlers before fleeing into surrounding jungle.

About 15 guerrillas of the Tripura National Volunteers stormed into Dhumacherra village and sprayed automatic gunfire at three houses, police in the Tripura state capital Agartala said. The dead included two women and an eight-year-old boy.

Singapore slashes circulation of economic magazine

SINGAPORE (R) — The weekly circulation in Singapore of the Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) was slashed by about 90 per cent on Saturday for alleged involvement in domestic politics.

A Communications and Information Ministry statement charged that the Hong Kong-based magazine "attempted to pit the Catholic Church against the prime minister and the government, and sow suspicion among Catholics in Singapore against them."

It was the fourth publication to fall foul of the Singapore government and have its circulation restricted in the past 17 months. Time, Asiaweek, and the Asian Wall Street Journal all had their circulation limited and only Time's has been restored.

Singapore's parliament passed a tough law in August 1986 giving the government power to restrict sales of foreign journals deemed to be interfering in local politics.

The ministry statement said from Dec. 29 the circulation of the FEER in Singapore would be limited to 500 copies weekly from about 10,000 copies.

The controversy between the Review and the Singapore government centres over a Dec. 17 article on Father Edgar D'Souza, a Roman Catholic priest who resigned the priesthood last week.

The government linked D'Souza, 39, to an alleged Marxist plot to overthrow it and accused him of having an affair with a woman. D'Souza left Singapore last June for Australia.

The statement said the article was based on a distorted account by D'Souza of a meeting on June 2 between Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and Archbishop Gregory Yong. The meeting followed the arrest of 16 alleged Marxists including 10 church workers.

18 Mahathir opponents to spend 2 years in jail

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Eighteen Malaysian opposition leaders and academics held since October without trial under a security law will spend the next two years in prison, family and political sources said on Saturday.

The main opposition Democratic Action Party told reporters seven of its 16 top leaders had been sent to northern Kamunting detention camp for two years while two others had been released.

All seven are members of parliament.

The others given extended detention by the government were leaders of the fundamentalist Muslim Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, academics and critics of government policy on religion and culture, a group monitoring deten-

tion developments told Reuters. "The incarceration of our leaders is most unjustified, a gross abuse of the internal security act to stifle legitimate criticisms against the government," Democratic Action Party Secretary-General Lee Lam Thye said.

"We deny that our leaders had aroused racial sentiments... The most unjustified thing about the detentions is that all those who were responsible for creating the tense situation right from the very outset were allowed to get away scot-free," he added.

The Democratic Action leaders, including Secretary-General Lim Kit Siang, were among more than 100 people arrested in the largest security crackdown in Malaysia in over a decade. Police said the arrests were aimed at reducing high racial tension.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN
AND OWEN GARIBAY
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READ YOUR OPPONENTS

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ Q 8 6 4
♥ A K
♦ 9 8 3 2
♣ J 10 8

WEST
♠ 9 7 5 2
♥ Q 10 6 3
♦ K J
♣ 7 6 4

EAST
♠ A J
♥ 8 7 5
♦ Q 10 7 4
♣ 9 8 3 2

SOUTH
♠ K 10 9
♥ J 9 4 2
♦ A 6 5
♣ A K Q

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♥ Pass 3 NT Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♥

Bridge is played with 52 cards. You must cope not only with your assets, but with what knowledge you can derive from the cards your opponents play.

The auction was routine. North checked for four-card majors in case his side had a 4-4 spade fit, then settled in the no trump game when his partner showed the "wrong" major.

West's lead of a heart was a devastating blow. To come to nine

tricks, declarer would have to develop three tricks in spades, and the opening lead attacked his only entries. There would be no problem if spades split evenly and East had the jack, but if the suit divided 4-2,

the defenders might be able to knock out the second heart entry before the spades were cashable.

At trick two declarer led a low spade from dummy, and East made the fine play of raising with the ace. (Had he meekly produced the jack, declarer would have won with the king, used the 10 to force out the ace, and then taken a marked finesse for the nine.) Declarer was at the crossroads.

Declarer realized that East would play the ace in second seat from only one of two holdings: the singleton ace, or A-J doubleton. With any other holding it would have been automatic to play low.

If East held the bare ace, the contract was destined to fail. But if East held A-J, declarer had to create a finesse position. To accomplish that, he unlocked his 10 under the ace. Thereafter, matters were routine. Declarer won the heart return on the table, picked up the jack of spades by leading to his king, and then confidently finessed the eight of spades. When that held, nine tricks were in the bank.

COLUMNS 7 & 8

Crowds stop police arresting tree climber

STAFFORD, England (AP) — Seasonal goodwill temporarily broke down as Christmas Eve shoppers and bystanders scuffled with police and stopped them arresting a man who climbed 50 feet (15 metres) up Stafford's Christmas tree. To the delight of crowds full of festive spirit, the man defied orders by the guardians of law and order to come down from his lofty perch for more than an hour. Stafford police said in a statement that when he did finally come down of his own free will, members of the crowd who had gathered to watch the spectacle scuffled with officers who tried to arrest him and he got away. Nobody was hurt in the scuffles, but police said they arrested several people for attacking the officers.

Prisoners celebrate Christmas with riots

SYDNEY (R) — Alcohol-fuelled riots in two of Australia's largest jails injured several wardens on Christmas Day, officials said. Four officers were hurt, two seriously, in Sydney's Long Bay Jail when around 100 prisoners went on a two-hour rampage after drinking home-brewed alcohol. Tear gas was used to quell the riot after convicts broke open a store at the activities centre and seized gym weights to attack officers. In Brisbane Prison, six prisoners assaulted three prison officers after drinking home brew concocted from fruit and yeast. One warden was rushed to hospital with severe facial injuries. Prison Officers Association President Pat Armstrong attacked government failure to protect officers in a year when over 150 have been beaten up by inmates. "The trauma and effects of these bashings stay with them forever," he said. "It should be law that prisoners be given a mandatory life sentence for assaulting a prison officer."

Strip-search reveals suspect is woman

WEST HARTFORD, Connecticut (AP) — Florida authorities made a startling discovery when they strip-searched a suspect accused of bilking three Connecticut banks out of more than \$80,000 before disappearing last summer. He is a she. The suspect, known as Richard Wong or Chung Yin Wong, looks like a man, talks like a man, identifies herself as a man on legal documents and has a wife, local police and Florida officials say. "He was always dressed in a suit, wore glasses, polite, a real gentleman," said West Hartford Police Lt. Anthony Duffy, who prepared an affidavit for Wong's arrest. Wong was arrested on Dec. 18 at the offices of Trans-Atlantic Marketing in Coral Springs, Florida. She will be returned to Connecticut soon. Hartford state's attorney John M. Bailey said. "The person we have is the person you know as Richard Wong," said Coral Springs police detective Robert Vernon. "This is a woman playing a man." Vernon said that he was suspicious about Wong's gender, but Wong insisted she was a man. Only after Wong was taken to the county detention centre did the detective learn otherwise. A caller from the Sheriff's Department said, "I'm going to send you back to anatomy class." Vernon said.

Fat lottery showers millions on Spain

MADRID (R) — Spain ground to a halt as its Christmas lottery, the world's biggest, showered \$745 million among winners throughout the country, including a bishop. Radio stations suspended news bulletins and millions of mesmerised television viewers watched as orphans spun giant drums for several hours to select hundreds of winning numbers. This year's lottery was the richest ever, but there was no big winner. The main prize, "El Gordo" (the fat one), was shared among hundreds, including the Bishop of Majorca who won \$72,000. El Gordo, worth \$2.2 million, went mostly to the Mediterranean City of Alicante. Leopoldo Soria and Belen Carretero, a young couple due to get married next year, won half a million dollars. Children of the San Ildefonso Orphanage ritually sang the numbers and the prizes in the draw at the headquarters of the national lottery. Pandemonium broke out when 13-year-old Gemma Llorente, blinded by camera flashes and overcome by stage fright, misread the amount corresponding to number 20,064, El Gordo. She was made to sing again: "250 millones de pesetas" (\$2.2 million). Spain's 38 million people for the first time spent more than 100 billion pesetas (\$909 million), a staggering \$25 per head, on Christmas lottery tickets. One rare exception was Finance Minister Carlos Solchaga. "I have never bought a lottery ticket," he said. But he was the single biggest winner as his ministry creamed off nearly a third of the takings.

Brides offered on trial basis

MUNICH, West Germany (AP) — Officials are investigating marriage brokers in Bavaria who offer Thai brides who can be returned or exchanged, police said Tuesday. The Bavarian State Prosecutor's Office searched the offices of 10 Munich-area marriage brokers in December, a police statement said. Three Thai women were arrested on charges of illegally entering West Germany, the statement said. Police said the searches also turned up files and addresses which could result in charges against the marriage brokers for violating immigration laws. According to the statement, the women, mostly from poor families, are recruited by a married Thai couple operating who promise them work and husband in West Germany. In Munich, they offered to prospective spouses at prices up to 10,000 marks (\$6,060), the statement said. The brokers guarantee their customers can exchange the women if they are not satisfied, the statement said. The statement described one case in which a 27-year-old pregnant Thai woman was given to a 39-year-old West German after she had already been offered to three other men aged 27, 76 and 85. In another case, a 76-year-old West German retiree made a down-payment of 5,000 marks (\$3,030) on a 26-year-old Thai woman. The woman disappeared four days later and is still being sought, the statement said. Police also found a case in which the bride confiscated the passport of a woman who rejected several prospective husbands. Police declined to reveal the names of those involved in the ongoing investigation.

Gene that determines sex found

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (AP) — Scientists believe they have found nature's sex trigger, a single gene that determines whether a fertilised egg will grow to be a boy or a girl. Their study suggests that a person's sex is governed by the absence or presence of this gene, which acts as a sort of master regulator. The gene appears to start a complex chain reaction of hormones that eventually leads to the development of a male. Without the gene the embryo begins a different pathway and grows into a female. The gene is located on the Y chromosome, which is part of the human genetic library of men but not women. The researchers believe that a virtually identical gene controls sex determination in monkeys, dogs, cattle and all other mammals. "This clearly is landmark set of experiments," said Nobel laureate David Baltimore, director of the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, where the gene was isolated. "Although it doesn't tell you anything that you've always wanted to know about the difference between men and women," he added, "it tells you how that difference was first laid down." Besides giving important insights into one of the basic processes of life, the research may also provide new clues for coping with infertility and problems of sexual development. The gene was isolated by Dr. David C. Page and colleagues at the Whitehead Institute, a lab affiliated with Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A report on the work is being published in Thursday's issue of the Journal Cell.